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AND OTHER

STORIES ABOUT SCHOOLS

BY

C. W. BARDEEN
Editor of the School Bulletin

SYRACUSE, N. Y.
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The Trial Balance

THE TRIAL BALANCE

I

New York, May 19, 1911

Felix Ball,

Principal public school,

Rollstone, N. Y.

Over till Tuesday. Dine with me Sunday night, St. Regis.

ALVA KEENE

II

"If it isn't the old boy himself. I'm mighty glad to lay eyes on you, Felix."

"Alva, old fellow, to think that we roomed together four years and haven't seen each other for thirty."

"It is a shame. I have been over every year three or four times, but always for an

important interview and back by the next steamer. After all, you haven't changed much, old chum."

"You're a little short on hair."

"To call attention to your own thick locks barely turning gray. You always were conceited about your good looks, Felix. I wouldn't have a leonine mane like yours for a million pounds; I should fancy every woman was in love with me."

"How like you that sounds. We might be back in old South Middle. Ever remember those days, Alva?"

"Do I? Why, Felix, I sometimes wonder what a man who hasn't been through college does to fill that vacuum in his memory. Remember when I snow-balled the college clock back so you could get ready for that private examination?"

"Yes; we thought for a while it was

going to lose you your scholarship. But old Tommy was a good soul: his barks were worse than his marks. Going to have dinner up here?"

"Yes, I never eat in the public dining room. For one thing I always carry my own wines. Then my man knows how to pick out of the menu just what will fit me, to keep the seasoning down, and to serve it precisely at the moment."

"You don't mean to say you keep a valet?"

"He is a good deal more than a valet. He has been with me now twenty years. and I leave everything to him. He even tells me when I need new clothes, and orders them himself unless I want to change the style. I never think of paying a hotel bill or buying a railroad ticket."

"Can you trust him so absolutely?"

"Yes. He gets his little commissions,

but that is no loss to me and he is honest to the penny."

III

"How did you come to go to London?"

"Queer affair. I came down here as you know to study law, but I dined at the University club with Newton Collins and his uncle happened to come in and sit down with us. This uncle is one of the head men with O. U. Grab & Co., and as luck would have it he wanted a fellow in his department; not a clerk but a sort of errand-boy on a large scale—chap he could send around to banks and customers. He took a notion to me and offered me the place, at more than I could expect to earn as a lawyer, so I began the next day."

"But that was in New York."

"Yes. One day I was called into the Chief's office. 'I have rather taken a

notion to you,' he said; 'you do your work quickly and quietly. Now I am going to test you on a matter of importance that I should usually entrust to an older man. I want you to buy a controlling interest in the stock of the Tontumwa and Des Moines railroad, a little affair in Iowa not yet wholly built, and owned locally. Go out there, search out the stockholders, and buy at least five thousand shares.' "

"Were those all the directions?"

"Yes, that closed the interview. I got certified checks for what I wanted to take with me, arranged to draw for the rest, and started. Three weeks later I laid fifty-one hundred shares on Mr. Grab's table. I had even secured them below the market price."

"How did you do it?"

"That would be too long a story. In

general I went to Iowa as a seller of stock, looked up the people who had the Tontumwa, tried to sell them other stock, and finally traded."

"Mr. Grab must have been pleased."

"He didn't say much but I knew he was. A month later he sent me to Germany to buy a block of Reading that was owned by some thirty bankers over there. I came back with it and he sent me to the London office for a permanent place. I am now third on the list, but the two over me do the society act. I am the financial head, and all the Chief's important cables are in a cipher that only I can read. I sign all checks; you would be astonished to know what an amount I could draw from the Bank of England on a slip of paper that I filled out on the counter."

"It must be a big responsibility."

"Yes, but it is fun. I have carried through some big deals. One day, some fifteen years ago, the Chief cabled me that Kewte had bought up one of the Chief's brokers. Of course we have our own seat on the stock exchange and deal directly, but when anything big is on we can't do it because it would reveal our plans. So we give trades on the dead quiet to young brokers, whom we can trust usually because the commissions are enormous. In those days the Chief was making his way up, and Kewte was his most annoying competitor, absolutely without scruple and with lots of keen sagacity.

"Some way or other he got hold of this broker, who promised to betray us. The Chief got wind of it and determined to turn the tables. So he entrusted more and more to this broker, asked his advice

and apparently followed it, encouraging him to concoct some big plot. It all worked as he expected. This broker advised him to sell Southwest, saying the price was too high and that there was a chance to make a big turn. The Chief already knew that all the loose stock of Southwest had been picked up, but he also knew that Sonnenschein Brothers, a German firm on Lombard street, had an enormous block of it. When the road was built they had believed in it and recommended it to their German customers, and when it went down to 5 they bought it all up, some 50,000 shares, and were holding it. The Chief cabled me to get these shares.

"I sent a man over and found that Kewte had already secured an option, and it looked at first as if for once I couldn't carry out my orders. But that night at

the club I happened to ask a promising young broker about the Sonnenscheins, and discovered that they wanted to sell out and return to live their old age in Frankfort. He told me a man I knew had been in negotiating with them and the papers had been drawn. The transaction could be closed up any day, but it required a cash advance of a hundred thousand pounds, which thus far this man had been unable to raise.

"You can judge what that meant to me. I hunted up the man that night, routed him out of bed, and inquired about the Southwest stock. He told me the option was only verbal, not legally binding on the Sonnenscheins and not binding at all on their successors. The Southwest was appraised in the sale at 10, for although the market price was higher it was realized

that to throw so big a block on the market of a stock that had never paid a dividend would lower the price almost to zero. In fact it was the necessity of holding this dead stock that blocked the deal.

"I offered to take that Southwest at 10 and give him the money the next morning. He jumped at the chance, went to the Sonnenscheins with my hundred thousand pounds, got the papers executed, took possession, and brought the fifty thousand shares of stock to me at the station, just in time for me to catch the steamer.

"I cabled the Chief that I had it with me on the *Lucania*, and he knew what to depend on. So he let his treacherous broker persuade him to sell fifty thousand shares of Southwest on the day the steamer arrived, making sure she would dock before noon. Kewte of course bought every

share, running the price up to 850. So far as the street could see the Chief was forty millions to the bad, a good deal of money for him in those days, and one afternoon newspaper headed a column 'Grab is Grabbed', narrating the transaction and even boasting how Kewte had trapped the Chief. There was widespread belief that the Chief would go bankrupt.

"A little before 2:15 Kewte appeared himself, wanting to exult over his fallen enemy. I was in the office and the Chief motioned to me to stay.

" 'I thought I'd come over and straighten out this deal with you,' Kewte said condescendingly. 'You know of course that those fifty thousand shares of Southwest were bought for me and of course you can't deliver 'em. I own every share of

Southwest available. Now how shall we fix it?'

"'There is only one way to fix it,' said the Chief. 'You've bought the fifty thousand shares: take them and pay for them.'

"'Where are you going to get them?'

"'I've got them. You don't suppose I sell what I haven't got, do you?'

"Kewte turned pale. 'Where did you get them?' he gasped.

"'Why, my young friend here arrived from London this morning with the Sonnenschein shares in his bag."

"'The Sonnenschein shares? Why I had an option on them.'

"Only verbal. It hasn't been announced yet, but the Sonnenscheins sold out a week ago to a friend of ours, and he turned over the stock to us. Here it is."

"You should have seen Kewte's face.

I don't know where he raised it but somehow or other he got the certified checks together and accepted the stock. He has it yet. But after that he didn't lock horns with the Chief again."

"I never knew you had such a talent for business, Alva."

"I haven't a bit; that is my strong point. If I had, I should be trying to improve on my instructions. As it is I do just what I am told to and take no responsibility for the results."

"Aren't you told to do some things you wouldn't like to be responsible for?"

"I see you know the Chief's reputation. Well, he is a hard man; he has already brought on one panic when there was something he wanted to buy and he is not unlikely to do it any time. Nobody would try to form any very large corpora-

tion without letting him in for from one to a hundred millions for the sake of his influence. Like any business man he buys cheap and sells dear, and he is strong enough now to turn the market either way. But with all that I don't bother. If he tells me to buy I buy; if he says sell I sell; if he says lend I lend; if he says call in your money I call it in. I never speculate a dollar myself. My savings are all in annuities or consols or United States bonds. There isn't a day when I could not make a small fortune on information that has come to me alone, but I haven't the least temptation to do it."

IV

"And all these years you haven't married, Alva?"

"After my experience with Drusilda Dean? No, indeed. Think of her mit-

tening me for Titus Plum just because his uncle left him twenty thousand dollars."

"Her mother thought twenty thousand dollars in the hand was worth anything you were likely to make in the bush."

"Yes, it was her mother's doing. I judge from the class reports that the twenty thousand is all the Plums have to live on, say a thousand a year. I could give her that a month for pin money."

"I always wondered why you went so wild over her, Alva; she wasn't much."

"No, but what there was of her was sweet and genuine and unsullied. A man's first love is only a clothes horse on which he hangs his ideals, and she never revealed any coarse streaks to disillusion me. Of course she was weak in permitting her mother to compel her to break our engagement, but she is the only woman except

my mother I have ever kissed, and I still think of her tenderly. There is very little I would not do for her if she were in need."

"Why don't you call on her? You can't sail till Tuesday."

"I wouldn't see her now for the world, any more than I would see in his coffin the face of a friend I had known only as young and strong and well. I want to remember her as she seemed to me when we were lovers. It was a sweet white soul she revealed to me so trustingly, and I want to think of it always in that fresh youthful form. No, it came to nothing, but it was a dear romance while it lasted and I have kept its memory sacred."

V

"I like to hear you say that, old chum. How it brings back the days in South Middle when we sat by the window looking

out on the Green and discussed what was worth while in life and how to reach it."

"Those were great days, Felix, when *Integer vitae* was our ambition as well as our song. Old fellow, I have never forgotten how you could always lift my highest ideals."

"Not more than you lifted mine, Alva. We did strive for the best in those days, didn't we? What you say of Drusilda makes me feel that you have been pretty true to your ideals; not many men would be so generous."

"Alas, Felix, my ideals are pretty well defeated and discouraged. What I seek now is comfort. You are enjoying this dinner, and you think your exhilaration comes from meeting your old roommate. It does largely, of course, but some of it comes from that sparkling burgundy. If

the emperor of Austria were entertaining the czar of Russia he couldn't give him a better glass of wine than that."

"It is delightful."

"There isn't another bottle in New York of that vintage of that year. It is a wine for princes. My man picked it up for me when a famous French cellar was dispersed at the Hotel Drouot. I mention it to show what is left of my ideals. I can afford everything that makes life comfortable and my man knows how to get it for me."

"Aren't you afraid of gout?"

"It is an element of my comfort that I am escaping it. I live simply. Take this dinner: only oysters, a clear soup, a single roast, a simple salad, bread pudding, Camembert—a child might eat it; very few people down stairs are calling for so little. But it is exquisitely cooked and daintily

served. That is what my man knows how to look after. You remember when William K. Vanderbilt brought over a cook from Paris at ten thousand a year?"

"I have a recollection of some such extravagance."

"What dish was it, do you suppose, that tempted Mr. Vanderbilt to engage him?"

"Some highly seasoned confection?"

"No, sir: a lamb chop. That is the cooking an epicure looks for: not elaborate dishes, but the standard dishes done to perfection."

"But your burgundy?"

"I don't drink burgundy every night. I have only seventeen bottles of this particular brand to last me the rest of my life, and I wouldn't open one of them for the Chief or for the American ambassador. They are all for my old friends, Felix, and

I hope you may share most of them yourself. No, this burgundy is an indulgence. My man will see that it is followed for a fortnight by the lightest of Mosels. I don't have to worry that my present comforts will bring me subsequent regret."

"Yet you miss the greatest comfort of all, a home."

"No, I wouldn't like to be tied up to any one woman. I am on the whole an eligible candidate for matrimony. I have money, position, respectability, a good natured disposition, so I find it easy to command attention. As I am a bachelor wholly without entanglement I have the right to look on any woman I meet as the not impossible she that shall command my heart and me, and I still enjoy fishing. The game is over for you: your trout are in the basket."

"Your chance of landing any in the basket grows less and less each year."

"True; I don't really expect to land any now, but I still have the pleasure of angling."

"What sort of fish interest you?"

"The mature ones. Do you know Sardou's *Pattes de Mouche*?"

"'A Scrap of Paper'? Yes, I saw the Kendalls in it years ago."

"The war of wits between the hero and heroine in that play is about my notion of enjoyment of society. I meet an astonishing number of charming women, unmarried but sophisticated and bright and keen and ready for an encounter. I find one on almost every steamer, and she makes the voyage agreeable."

"Why don't you marry one of them?"

"Because we are both too old to marry, too

accustomed to regard our own comfort, too little adjustable. Marriage is for youth.

VI

"But, Felix, you know not even my irrepressible egotism would ordinarily permit me to talk so long of myself without an inquiry about you. Tonight there are two reasons: one, that we have all the evening before us; the other, that since I have been anticipating this meeting after so long an interval I have been in a way summing up my life, estimating what it has really amounted to, comparing it with our ambitions in old South Middle. I want to see which of us has come nearer his ideals."

"It isn't like you to exult over me, Alva. You know I am only an insignificant schoolmaster."

"Still at Rollstone, I suppose; my telegram reached you there."

"Yes, I have been there twenty years."

"And expect to be twenty years more?"

"No. I should ask nothing better, but this is the day of young men. I am fifty-two. I may possibly hold on another ten years, but any day the feeling may begin to spread that I have outlived my usefulness, and I shall have to go."

"What is your salary?"

"Sixteen hundred."

"Less than I am allowed a month for expenses. Yet you were the brighter scholar and in everything the better man. How do you live on it?"

"By not wanting what I can't afford."

"Felix, come with me to London. I will give you twice your present salary for twenty years, and a pension the rest of your life."

"What could I do in London? Are you

going to have a school for employes of your banking house?"

"No, I want you in business."

"A schoolmaster is supposed to know almost everything except just that; the most unreasonable do not look to us for business sense."

"As I have told you, I haven't any: all I have is loyalty in obeying orders. I want somebody in my office I can trust as the Chief trusts me. They are not easy to find. Really, Felix, I don't know where I could put six hundred pounds a year to better service than to have you in charge of some of my delicate work. Come back with me; the favor will be to me, not to you."

"It is like you to offer it and persist you are doing it selfishly, Alva, but I couldn't accept it. You say you are no longer adjustable enough to marry; I am

not adjustable enough to change my trade. I have been a teacher thirty years, almost half as long again as we had lived when we were in college. I can do that work better than anything else. Sometimes I dare to hope I do it pretty well. Certainly I love it.

"Just think, Alva, many of my pupils now are children of fathers and mothers I taught, whom I saw grow up, and learned to be fond and proud of. When their children come to me it is as though they in a way belonged to me, almost like grandchildren. I tell you, Alva, there isn't any calling in life that brings the pleasure of a harmonious school, where faces light up as you enter a room, where the littlest child comes to you as a matter of course with her troubles, where you are prouder than any one in it of your graduating class, and where it is a daily occurrence for some man

or woman to stop you in the street to tell you how often they apply what they learned of you in school. Sometimes they send for me when they are dying, and if the other side proves to be what we used to imagine it, the first ones I shall want to look up over there will be some of my old pupils. No, Alva, we have managed to save a little, enough to keep us out of the poorhouse when I am finally turned adrift; I shall teach as long as I am allowed and then I shall rest, but I never shall take up any other employment."

VII

"You really mean that, don't you, Felix? I envy you. I am not so very fond or so very proud of my work. It is a cut-throat game. A bandit has more mercy than a broker. It is squeeze when you want to buy and squeeze when you want to sell.

We don't add anything to the world; we simply levy tribute on all industry; we reap where we have not sown. The woman who tends a carding machine in a Lancashire mill for twenty shillings a week pays her penny to us because we have overcapitalized her mill, till it must cut down her wages to pay dividends on watered stock. Bulls and bears, the world calls us and it is unfair to the bulls and bears."

"If you despise your work so much why do you keep at it, Alva? You can afford to retire."

"Retire to what? All these years I have been on the jump. With a banker it is more than eternal vigilance: it is eternal spying, prying, plotting, counterplotting. Much as I am enjoying this talk with you, my only real friend in the world, I haven't been able to keep my

mind on it all the time. Tomorrow we have an interview with the Secretary of the treasury, and my thoughts will keep running off upon that."

"Then you are going to Washington tonight?"

"O no, Washington is coming to us. If the Chief should call on the Secretary of the treasury tomorrow every evening newspaper in the land would record it in headlines. But the Secretary can come here, apparently on other business, meet the chief secretly in one of the big office buildings, and nobody is the wiser."

"What are you to see him about?"

"The new Chinese loan. We have the three hundred millions raised if we can secure the right diplomatic conditions."

"Then the Chief is ready to invest in the new republic?"

"O no, the Chief does not put money in any more: he takes money out. We don't put up any money ourselves but we get other people to put it up and we take our share of the bonds."

"No wonder your mind wanders from poor little me, when you are planning a national loan."

"But you can't imagine how I detest the whole business. We are not doing this for China: we are doing it to make twenty millions for ourselves. That word millions has become an obsession. I try to drive it out of my thoughts but it has soaked into my mind till my brain reeks with it. Always that word is first—millions, millions, millions. Do you still put yourself to sleep as in old South Middle days by allowing yourself the luxury of imagining the impossible?"

"Yes, indeed. Remember how after you had struck out seven sophomores by seven successive balls you used to imagine goose-egging Harvard on twenty-seven successive balls?"

"Yes, and didn't even make the varsity nine: how freshman glory peters out by senior year. Games have put me to sleep often. I still keep up my billiards and I persuaded my favorite London club to put in a carom table. It took with the younger fellows; we have four carom tables now, with the best American fittings, and an annual tournament. I have still managed to win all three tournaments despite increasing handicaps, and for a while I used to go to sleep on running out fifty points from the scratch at three-cushions: sometimes I followed the game through twenty-odd shots before I dozed off. But

I can't do it any more; it doesn't interest me, I play only because I need exercise. I don't care anything about a record: it won't take my mind off those infernal millions, millions, millions."

"I should think you would manufacture imaginings out of some of your women acquaintances."

"I used to while there was a possibility of marrying, but I know now that I wouldn't give up my present comfort for any woman on earth. In twenty years no woman could learn to give me just what I want, when I want it, how I want it, as my man gives it to me today, even if she were as willing as he is to devote herself entirely to my wishes. So the women I meet mean less and less to me and are sooner forgotten. They were once a game of chess; now they are only a game of old

maid and sure to win. What are the imaginings you put yourself to sleep on now, Felix?"

"I hesitate to tell you, Alva, they are so sacred to me, but it shall be as in old South Middle: we will have no secrets.

"You know, of course, that the one affliction of our otherwise happy married life is that God has given us no children. When I think how many thousands of women are this night grieving almost to suicide over an approaching infant while we have longed for one above everything else but in vain, it seems almost as if there were a mistake somewhere in man's regulation of society. But while we have so much to be thankful for we try not to be unhappy, and my wife distributes her motherhood over all the friendless little tots in the village.

"Here comes my nightly luxury. For years the moment my head has struck the pillow I have imagined that a boy really came to us. I have gone through the first faint hopes, the confirmation, the sense of reality, the approaches, the birth, the infancy, the first tooth, the first short dress, the early attempts at speech, the first trousers, the learning to read, the first days at school, and so on, till now I have brought him up to where we are planning to send him away to school. He was graduated from the high school last week, but he is a year too young to go to Yale, and we are allowing ourselves to be persuaded that he ought to go to Hotchkiss for a year, to polish up his fit and to give him the right kind of social start. It takes a good deal of planning to provide the money, and you can't imagine what it

means to have him go away from home, but I feel sure we shall yield, and that in a night or two he will bid us good by for Lakeside."

"Is it so real as that to you, Felix?"

"Indeed it is. I cannot waste my waking hours on such impossibilities, but when the day's work is done and I am on my pillow I sink into that picture with a feeling of home-coming."

VIII

"As a man thinketh so he is. Felix, old fellow, how you make me recognize what an empty life I have led. My dreams when I can forget myself in them are only of winning out against somebody in some useless contest. Now that I no longer care to shine before a crowd I have nothing left. Every year my life has grown narrower, till now it is only the little blank

space in the corner of a check with a dollar mark before it."

"Why don't you make others happy with your money?"

"I have tried that, Felix, There is probably something wrong with me. I haven't sympathy enough or tact enough, for I have hardly ever tried to give to people without feeling I had injured them. It is not a joke that gratitude is a lively sense of favors about to come. The few enemies I have are persons for whom I have done something but stopped short of doing the more they wanted. No Felix, I, have tried and tried honestly, but my benevolences have been failures. The worst harm you can do a man is to suggest to him that it is easier to lean than to stand."

"But in business you must have a good many chances to be generous."

"No; that would not be business, at least our kind of business. Besides, I have little initiative. Ordinarily I simply take orders and follow them. I have considerable latitude as to method, but none as to result."

"Give the whole thing up, Alva. Come to Rollstone to live. I can't offer you sparkling burgundy, but I can share a happy home with you, and you will find my wife perhaps as quick and clever in conversation as some of the chance women you meet on steamers, with this difference that she is always to be depended on as a true woman and your steadfast friend."

"I know you mean every word of it, Felix, but it is too late. I am locked to my treadmill, and I must go on tramping, tramping until I drop. Sometimes I wonder whether I could have amounted to anything if I had controlled circumstances

instead of yielding to them—if for instance I had gone on with my law instead of being bribed to take up a kind of work I had no respect for."

"But think what you have become, Alva—an interview with the Secretary of the treasury tomorrow."

"He sees me as he would see a carpenter or a decorator. My personality counts nothing. As representative of the Chief I have been able to get two hundred and eighty millions subscribed, but I am as small a factor in the matter as the paying-teller who cashes your check. You don't look at him: you count your money."

"But think of being intimate with these kings of finance."

"I am intimate with them as their butlers and chauffeurs are—I am useful to them in a single way. I doubt if any

other man living knows the Chief as well as I do, but he shows me only his financial side. He is a great collector of books and pictures, but when he displays them to me he tells me what they cost—he assumes that only the money value will interest me. As a matter of fact I know something of books and pictures myself and I could have saved him from blunders, but it would never occur to me to suggest it to him. To him I am simply a London clerk whom he can depend on."

"Do you think he has no affection for you?"

"Affection? You make me smile. He has no affection for anything. His test for everybody is, how useful can he be to me? I am pretty useful, and shall be for some years. When I am too old to do my work well, somebody else will take my

place, with as little compunction on the Chief's part as he would feel in throwing away the butt of a cigar to light a new one. Affection? There isn't a man or woman on earth who cares that for me:" and Alva snapped his fingers.

"O come, Alva, you know better than that. I am not of much consequence, but at least I am your friend."

"Yes, of thirty years ago, in remembrance. Let's be honest with each other, Felix. We have been reviving old memories tonight, bringing back the four happiest years of our lives, and in the warmth of these recollections we feel fond of each other. But you couldn't be fond of me as I am today. There is no reason why you should be. I haven't answered one in four of your letters, I have never even seen your wife, I have been over here a

good hundred times and this is the first time I have tried to see you. That isn't friendship. Two college seniors of thirty years ago have been talking tonight. They were both good fellows, with worthy aims and purpose and self-control. You are that now. I am not. Life is summed up in love and work. I love nobody and nobody loves me, and I despise my work. That is the way my trial balance sums up. Yours is just the opposite: your heart overflows toward everybody, at home and in your village. Consequently you move in an atmosphere of love and reverence that you have won and have deserved. Your face lights up when you speak of your wife, and it glows when you refer to your pupils present and past. The two great prizes of life you have won as notably as I have lost them.

"Take your hopes of the next world—your thought of it is of meeting some of your pupils who have gone before. There is nobody in heaven I want to see, at least of those I have known since I left college. They are all like my ship acquaintances. I had a very good time coming over last week. The woman of this voyage was unusually congenial and we parted almost sentimentally. Yet she did not ask me to call. I do not know her address. If by accident she should go back on Tuesday's steamer we should both be sorry. The acquaintance was for the voyage and is finished. By disuse my power of affection has atrophied; in its place I have only intellectual appreciation, without roots."

"But, Alva—"

"No, no, Felix, it is of no use. Whether you see it or not I have lost everything and

I have lost it irrevocably. You have won everything worth having, and no one can take it away from you. The clock is striking eleven and the Chief will he here in a moment: there is his ring now. We must say good-bye. My dear old Felix, it is a joy to see that one of us has a balance to the good. Will you stay and meet Mr. Grab? Good-bye then and God bless you.—Ah, Mr. Grab, on time as always. I have the figures ready."

The Ossahinta Scimitar

THE OSSAHINTA SCIMITAR

I

In the final period of the afternoon the senior class of the Ossahinta high school had a recitation in English composition conducted by the principal. On the last Friday in November Mr. Morley said to the class, "Instead of the regular lesson I am going to ask you to consult with me today on what shall be done with the fifteen minutes we give to the morning opening. I have word from the president of the board that the appeal of Father Kelly against religious exercies has been decided in his favor, and that we can no longer have Bible-reading or prayer or religious songs. The question arises what

to substitute. I have been here so little time that I feel you as seniors know the special needs of the school better than I do, and I want your help. Has any one a suggestion to make?"

"In the Westminster school," said Alfred Appleby, "they have current topics."

"That isn't a bad idea. Who gives them?"

"Anybody that wants to. Each one who has found anything interesting raises his hand and is allowed to tell it."

"Suppose nobody has found anything interesting?"

"I don't know about that. The morning I was there more scholars raised their hands than there was time to hear."

"What topics did they give?"

"All kinds: about what congress was doing; the new Cunard ship; an aeroplane

flying across the English channel—things like that."

"Nothing local, that happened in Westminster?"

"O yes: the grocer's horse that ran away, a barn that was burned—things like that."

"Nothing about the school?"

"Nothing that I remember: of course that wouldn't be news to the scholars."

"It must be an alert school if there are always plenty of pupils to tell these things without being appointed to look them up. I should feel proud if we could do that here. Any other suggestions?"

"I should think all the pupils would get ready to tell the same thing," said Cornelius Carrol. "This morning, for instance, everybody in school would want to tell about the collision on the Twentieth Century limited, and when the first

scholar who spoke had told that the rest would have nothing ready."

"That is a sagacious thought. What would you suggest?"

"Why not appoint certain ones for each morning, one to tell what had happened in Westminister, another what had happened in the rest of the county, another what had happened in the rest of the state, and so on?"

"A very good suggestion. Appointments for each morning might be made a week beforehand, so that each would be looking up news in his department. We are getting on finely. Any other suggestions?"

"Would girls have to take part?" asked Ruth Leslie.

"Assuredly: they are usually fonder of news and tell it better than boys."

"Then I should want to write what I had to tell; I could never get up and speak it."

"I should think there would be some advantages for all of us to write," remarked Neil Garvie. "Then we could be more condensed and comprehensive and careful."

"If we all wrote what we said every morning it would be like a newspaper," laughed Zelotes Tighe.

"Why couldn't we make it just that?" suggested Alfred Appleby. "Suppose we all wrote on regular regents paper so that the sheets would be alike; then when we were done and handed them in they could be put together like a morning newspaper, and called *The Ossahinta High School Daily*."

"Really, scholars, you are delighting

me; I had no idea there was so much originality in school. Let's go on with this last idea. Who can develop it?"

"If we were going to give this journal the name of the school," remarked Moses Ford, "there ought to be some dignity and forethought to it. There are twenty scholars in the class and twenty days in the school month. Suppose each one of us has charge of the entire journal for one day each month, and edits it as he would if it were a real newspaper."

"That would take a good deal of time and responsibility," sighed Alexander Marden.

"If we undertake this, why should not the journal we edit take the place of the compositions we write?" asked Emma Hanscom.

"And why would not the journal of the

day be just the thing for us to criticise in this class at night?" asked Timothy Ferris.

"Go on, scholars; you are doing my heart good; I am proud to be principal of a class like this."

"If we did get out this journal every day," suggested Clara Gordon, "and corrected it in the class at night, why couldn't it then be copied and filed and handsomely bound each term, so that it would be a permanent record not only of the class but of the times?"

This brought a round of applause: the project had taken hold of the class.

"That would make it really a newspaper," remarked Mr. Morley. "The project is a good one, but it has dangers. Many a school has got into serious trouble over a school newspaper. I don't feel

that I know you well enough yet to be sure whether it would be safe to make a permanent record of your morning outpourings."

"What would be the dangers?" asked Alfred Appleby.

"The same dangers, to a considerable extent, that beset the editor of your village newspaper. First, that of libel. You boys and girls have positive opinions, and are apt to express them without reserve. The spoken word is forgotten, but the written word that goes on permanent record may make trouble long after. If we adopt this plan there must be a censorship. It must be agreed that the journal for the day shall be brought to me before school, and that anything I mark with a blue pencil shall be absolutely suppressed. Also that I may terminate or

suspend it with any number. Do you all agree to that?"

There was no dissenting voice, and Mr. Morley went on. "I like the adjective Moses Ford used: the journal should be dignified. That does not mean that it is to be stiff or formal, but that the editor is always to keep in mind that he is representing the Ossahinta high school, and that what he writes shall be worthy of the school. For instance, no one of you must use the journal to vent a personal spite or grievance. If you had quarrelled with another boy you might be tempted to tell something of him which though actually true was not characteristic and would represent him unfairly. Remember that as editors you represent not yourselves but the school, and that you must so represent it as to do the school honor."

"What ought we to call the paper?" asked Lucia Abbott.

A dozen names were offered, *The Ossahinta Journal*, *The Ossahinta Monitor*, *School Record*, *The Intelligencer*, etc., but when some one who had friends in Memphis suggested *The Ossahinta Scimitar* there was a round of applause.

"I don't know about that name; it suggests sharpness of tone," laughed Mr. Morley: but it pleased the scholars and was adopted unanimously.

"Now who shall edit the *Scimitar* for the month to come?" asked Mr. Morley. "Alfred Appleby was the first to suggest it, so he should have the honor of editing the first number, and we will look to him to read it next Monday. Are there any other preferences? If not we will put the other nineteen names into my hat and let

Alfred draw them out, and you shall be editors in the order your names are drawn."

This was satisfactory, and each member of the class accepted the day assigned. The rest of the period was spent in discussing details, and the pupils went home delighted. Mr. Morley was pleased with the spirit of the class, but he saw possible breakers ahead.

"However, it is worth the risk," he said to himself.

II

For a time the dangers were slight and easily avoided. Mr. Morley read every number carefully before school, and often used his blue pencil, but oftener on questions of style and expression than of matter. He did not prohibit personals, even bantering ones, but he insisted that the spirit should always be generous. The blue-

pencilled paragraphs were discussed in the recitation in the afternoon, and questions of kindness and good taste were illustrated in a way to make impression on the class.

"You can't afford to put a harsh judgment on record," Mr. Morley said. "How often the digs in a college annual have contained unkind cuts that the writers in after years would give much to recall. I remember this couplet of a senior:

'Unhappy product of untoward fate,
Too lah-de-dah to love, too mild to hate.'

"For all time whoever takes up that book to see the final judgment of the class upon that man will find that sentiment expressed. Sometime his children, his grandchildren will look it up, to see what kind of a man he was thought to be. The momentary satisfaction of uttering a witty

sarcasm is not worth such a monument of unkindness."

The class was impressed by his constant inculcation of Thackeray's tribute to his old gold pen:

"Nor pass the words as idle phrases by;
Stranger, I never wrote a flattery,
Nor signed the page that registered a lie."

He blessed the necessity that had led to the suggestion of the *Scimitar*, for it gave him opportunities he might have sought elsewhere in vain to teach the amenities of social life.

III

But one morning while the *Scimitar* was being read he saw Ruth Leslie start, flush, and then struggle vainly to repress her agitation, while the other members of the class glanced at her exultingly. The paragraph had struck him as he read

it before school as inane, but he supposed matter was scarce and it had been put in to fill up, so he passed it over. It read thus:

"The trial had been long and hard fought, with a brilliant array of counsel, scores of witnesses and experts, and a judge's charge that was considered exceptionally fair, yet the jury hopelessly disagreed and was finally discharged. 'How did it happen?' was asked of one of the jurors. 'Crass stupidity,' he replied. 'Someway they got together the eleven most obstinate men I ever saw.' The more stupidly obstinacy gets in its work, the more ruthlessly."

The school generally had not observed the play of words and Mr. Morley knew it would only distress Ruth the more to

mention it then, so he appeared unconscious of it.

The first recitation of the senior class was in algebra. Mr. Morley used the blackboard a great deal in mathematics, and had the slabs in his recitation room numbered from 1 to 20, so that each pupil had his own rectangle to work in, but he frequently changed their places, as he found that some pairs worked better when separated. No. 20 was by itself at the end of the room, betwwen two windows, so that the pupil working there had the back turned to the rest of the class. This morning Mr. Morley sent Ruth Leslie to this slab, and gave all the pupils problems from Droman's Review Lessons, of which each had a copy. He gave her a problem twice as long as any of the others, and told the scholars that as each finished his solution

and had it approved he could go up stairs and begin his exercise in laboratory physics. In this way all departed while Ruth was still engaged, and Mr. Morley could talk with her while he seemed to any one passing the door to be merely examining her work.

"What is it, Ruth?" he asked. It showed the hold he had upon the class when she burst into tears and begged, "Please don't ask me, Mr. Morley. It isn't anything you can help me about and I don't want to have you mixed up in it. Please let us work it out by ourselves."

"But, my child," said the principal, "you may trust me to look out for my own interest in this matter, and you must let me help you. I shall know what it is wise

to do or not to do. Just tell me all about it."

"It's the class subscription for commencement," she sobbed. "We had a meeting last night and it was voted to raise twenty dollars apiece, and I told them I couldn't possibly ask my mother for twenty dollars."

"Twenty dollars! What in the world is the class going to do with four hundred dollars?"

"O we are to have a band, and the invitations are to cost twelve cents each, and the programmes a lot more, and ribbon of the class colors is to be ordered for all the girls and to trim the room, and ever so many things: it amounted to more than four hundred dollars. But I couldn't. Mother has had to struggle ever so hard to get me through the year, and is

going without clothes herself to get my gown. The twenty dollars is simply impossible. I couldn't even mention it to her."

"My dear child," said the principal, "you are entirely right: you couldn't for a moment do otherwise. You leave this matter to me."

"O I wish you wouldn't get into it," she pleaded: "you don't know how bitter the class are."'

"They see things wrongly, Ruth, that is all," said the principal cheerfully. "You let me manage it and don't worry a bit. And remember, you are wholly, absolutely right. The class will see that as clearly as I do, long before commencement."

IV

He had cheered Ruth somewhat and he felt confident he could eventually persuade the class, but he knew how prone a crowd of young people are to run unreasoningly together, like sheep over a wall. So after much reflection he decided to walk past her home with Emma Hanscom, a mature, sensible, sound-minded girl who could be easily put right if she were seeing things in the wrong perspective. But the moment he alluded to the matter he saw that she was set in her opinion, like a mule that plants its front feet at an angle. "Excuse me, Mr. Morley," she said, "you know how much I respect you and trust you, but I can't discuss this matter with you: the class has made up its mind."

"But don't you see, Emma, that her mother simply can't afford it, and she would be wicked to ask for it?"

" 'Can't afford' is relative, Mr. Morley. If she had brain fever to-night her mother could afford to send to Pepperell for Dr. Howe, and that would cost a good deal more than twenty dollars. What she means is that she doesn't consider commencement as important a day as we do. You have been impressing upon us that it is a milestone, a mark of something finished, accomplished; for most of us, all of us so far as we know, it is the only commencement we shall ever have, and we feel that it ought to be commemorated fittingly. It isn't lack of money: it is lack of appreciation, lack of class spirit."

Yes, the class had made up its mind. He knew what that meant. He knew how

far *esprit de corps* would carry the best of people on the worst of missions. This was going to be a hard problem.

V

In the afternoon period when the *Scimitar* was taken up Mr. Morley said: "In the number read this morning there was a paragraph that I had glanced at without grasping its hidden meaning, but that proved to have all the characteristics I have oftenest warned you against. That will of course be omitted when the permanent copy is made."

In an instant he saw that the class looked upon this as a challenge and was prepared for the confiict. Moses Ford, the editor of the day, protested. "I don't see how we can omit the paragraph, Mr. Morley," he said respectfully but firmly: "it has been published."

"Many newspapers have to recall what they have published inadvertently, Moses. Suppose while Speaker Cannon's accumulation of property was under investigation the *Washington Post* had published a sonnet which seemed to praise him, but just as it began to be delivered discovered that it was an acrostic, the first letters reading, 'Jo, you are a thief.' What would be done? The presses would be stopped, the further distribution forbidden, and if the only copies gone out had been delivered by a single newsboy, that boy would be offered half a dollar apiece to go back and pick them up, with a promise of twenty dollars if he brought back the whole twenty."

"Very likely, Mr. Morley, because with the *Washington Post* the publication consists in having the paper read by its customers. The publication of the *Ossahinta*

Scimitar consists in having it read to the school, and that has already been done."

"Much mischief has been done, more than you will sometime wish to be responsible for; but we can prevent the permanent record that will for all time brand the class as cruel and brutal."

"We hold you to your agreement with us, Mr. Morley. Anything you blue-pencil goes out: anything you leave goes in."

"You know that if I had recognized the play on Ruth Leslie's name I should have blue-pencilled it."

"We can't go behind the returns. You passed the paragraph and it belongs to the paper."

The scholars all nodded their heads triumphantly.

"Well, Moses, if you hold me to the

letter of the law I must hold the class to the letter of the law. Our agreement also specified that I have power to terminate or suspend the *Scimitar* with any number. I terminate it with the number for yesterday."

"Excuse me, Mr. Morley, I don't think you can do that. You can terminate it today, but today's number is already a fact. You can't prevent the appearance of what already is."

Again the scholars nodded triumphantly. Evidently they had thought it all out and were fixed in their determination.

"Scholars," said Mr. Morley, "this looks like the irresistible force against the immovable obstacle. But the force must win out. We have worked together nine months without once having come to an irreconcilable disagreement. We have

differed sometimes, but we have talked the matter over and have been able to see the issue alike. Not once have I said must. Now we have come to the parting of the ways. You are not to be moved by argument. You will not yield willingly. It remains for me to exercise the authority vested in me. I hereby announce that *The Ossahinta Scimitar* ended with the number for yesterday. The number for today which I hold in my hand I shall destroy. The previous numbers will be bound into a volume and presented to the school. The *Scimitar* is no more."

Nineteen angrier boys and girls were never assembled. Some of the boys moved uneasily as though they would like to attack Mr. Morley physically. It was a critical moment for the Ossahinta high school.

VI

But Mr. Morley did not lose his head. "Now, scholars," he went on, "the question arises, how is this to affect our personal relations? We had become very good friends. I never worked with a class I liked better or appreciated more, and till this matter came up you have liked me. Must we now quarrel because we differ in opinion?

"People used to do that. Think how religious differences have led to fighting and persecution and cruelty, but we don't quarrel now because we go to different churches. Politics used to lead to personal quarrels but you whose fathers are democrats hear them discussing public questions in the most friendly way with those fathers who are republicans.

"I was once on a jury with five other men I had never known before. It was a damage case: a man claimed to have been injured in getting off a trolley car. He was his own first witness, and before he was half through he showed himself so plainly a low-lived, drunken, lying loafer that to my mind no possible evidence could give him the case. No other evidence of weight was presented, and we went to the jury room. The first ballot was three to three. We staid out all day; were taken by the sheriff to a hotel for lunch and dinner, and were threatened by the judge to be locked up all night. We were kept till after midnight, and every ballot was three to three. I can't imagine what grounds the opposite three had for wanting to give the fellow a verdict, but I never for a moment questioned that

they really read the evidence that way. They were intelligent men, above the suspicion of graft, honestly thinking the man had a case. We three wondered, but we did not suspect the motives or even the good sense of the other three. They simply saw the matter differently. We had no quarrel in the jury-room, we parted good friends, and we always meet pleasantly now. In fact I do not remember which were the three on the opposite side. I thought their opinion was foolish but I did not doubt that it was honest and I respected it and them.

"Now let us come to the case before us. You will admit that I have always been ready to listen to your opinions. Sometimes I have yielded to them. When you wanted your May picnic on Thursday I thought it was preposterous. We were

in the middle of our reviews, Thursday off meant a lost Friday, and we could not afford the time. You argued that it had been a wet month with no available Saturday, Thursday was sure to be dry and pleasant while rain was predicted for Friday, the May picnic was the great event of the senior class, and you promised to more than make up for Thursday by extra work on Friday and the next week. I yielded to you. I asked the board for the day though I well knew they thought me a crank to suggest it, and against my judgment I got it for you. Your judgment was better than mine. We had a delightful day, and you did make it good by extra work; you and I and the school were gainers by that Thursday off.

"I mention it to show that I have not been unreasonable with you. I am not

unreasonable with you now. I think you are cruelly unjust in your treatment of Ruth Leslie—who has not been here this afternoon and who can blame her?—but I am not going to interfere there. I know you all pretty well. Some of you are headstrong and obstinate and all of you in the flush of your coming triumph are somewhat over-enthusiastic about class spirit. But there is not a mean streak in any one of you—in any one of you," he repeated looking slowly from face to face. "Your attitude toward her comes not from dislike or jealousy or accumulated grudges but from excessive zeal. You will see this by and by and you will make it up to her. I can safely leave that to your own honest instincts, just now clouded over but sure to emerge and triumph.

"But this paragraph in the *Scimitar* is a wholly different matter. Your relations to Ruth Leslie are personal, but the *Scimitar* is the official organ of the school, which in my opinion would be irreparably injured if today's number should be preserved as read.

"Understand, I do not claim to be infallible in this. Many times since I was of your age I have been positive of opinions which proved to be as foolish as that of my fellows on the jury who would have given the man a verdict seemed to me. In arithmetic an answer is either wholly right or wholly wrong. There is no such dilemma in ethics. I have made lots and lots of mistakes when I felt sure I was doing just the right thing. Every one of you will make lots and lots of mistakes when you think you are doing just the

right thing. That is the way we get our moral education. All we can ask of ourselves or of one another is to do the honest best we can with the light that is given us.

"So I do not say I am infallibly right in suppressing this number of the *Scimitar*, but I do say that in my judgment there is no other course to pursue. You don't think so. Very well, I respect your judgment; I don't for a moment doubt that at this moment you are as honest in your opinion that I have no right to do this, as I am in mine that I have no right to do anything else. When this issue comes the authority is mine and I must exercise it. Can't you respect my honesty of opinion as well as I respect yours? Is it reason for you to feel resentful and hope I may not be re-elected because you see one side of this shield and I see the other?

"Now I want you scholars to talk this over. I am going through the building to consult the other teachers about the part each class shall take in the commencement exercises. I will give you the other half of this period for a class meeting, but I will be back in time to dismiss you."

VII

Mr. Morley was detained longer than he expected, and hurried back to the room to be sure to dismiss on the second, for he was as prompt in closing school as he was in opening. But as he entered by one door he saw Ruth Leslie come in at the other with her hat on, fetched by Lucia Abbott. While he was wondering, Moses Ford arose and said, "Mr. Morley, as editor of today's *Scimitar* I ask permission to withdraw a paragraph that I thought this morning to be cunning and

smart, but which I now recognize as unkind and unworthy of the class and of the school."

Then Emma Hanscom said, "I am asked by the class to say that we have voted instead of the ostentatious and vulgar display we had intended to limit the entire commencement expenditure to twenty dollars, all of which has been subscribed and paid in."

Then Alfred Appleby said, "The class asks me as its president to express our sorrow and our humiliation that we have been so unkind and unjust to Ruth Leslie, who was entirely right in refusing an unreasonable demand. This is our apology to her and it is sincere. The class asks me also to say to you, Mr. Morley, that it has appreciated the growing friendship of which you spoke, and that it never

realized as it does this minute what it is to have the guidance of a teacher who is not only kind but sagacious and wise, losing no opportunity to fit us for our coming responsibilities as men and women."

There was applause so unanimous and so long continued that it gave Mr. Morley a little needed time. When he found words he said. "I had supposed my eyes had grown water-proof. I find they are still leaky. But I didn't for a minute cease to trust you, did I, scholars?"

The Trouser-Pocket Thief

THE TROUSER-POCKET THIEF

I

It was Monday morning of the meeting of N. E. A. superintendents at Louisville, and Eugene Parton of Nashua bustled up to the desk of the Bedell house. "I have a double room with bath engaged for myself and Mr. Randolph," he said as he wrote their names in the register.

"When did you make reservation?" asked the clerk doubtfully.

"I telegraphed yesterday from Fallula."

"That would not help you," replied the clerk. "All of our rooms have been engaged for weeks."

"But you must find a room for us. This is the president of our board of education."

"It would not matter if he were president of the United States," replied the clerk wearily. "We haven't even a cot in a hall not spoken for long ago. Probably you can get accomodations at one of the hotels on the river, the Galt house or the Southern."

"We must be at headquarters," said Mr. Parton discontentedly.

"I am sorry but we cannot help you," was the clerk's finality, as he turned to the next guest.

It was awkward for Mr. Parton. Mr. Randolph had come upon his insistence and upon his promise to see that everything was of the best. The one value of these meetings was the lobby of the headquarters hotel. Mr. Parton was acquainted with many of the leading superintendents all over the country, and he had

planned to introduce Mr. Randolph, and bring to bear on Fallula the broader views of larger places. Not to find lodging here was most annoying.

"Excuse me," said a little man he had never seen before, "are you Mr. Parton of Fallula?"

"At your service." He said it graciously for he was glad to show Mr. Randolph that at least somebody knew him.

"I am Mr. Eveleth, the new superintendent at Winchendon."

"O yes, I had heard of Mr. Haskell's appointment as inspector. I am glad to make your acquaintance. This is Mr. Randolph, president of our board at Fallula."

"I am honored to know you, Mr. Randolph. I made bold to speak because I may possibly be able to help you. I

engaged a double room here some weeks ago, and I am occupying it. I yielded one of two beds to Superintendent Terrill of Braintree, but the room is large and two cots can easily be placed in it, one of which I shall be glad to occupy. If you can put up with such crowded accomodations, you will be most welcome."

"You tempt us beyond resistance, for it is half the meeting to be at headquarters. But it hardly seems right to put a stranger to such invoncenience."

"Perhaps you divine that I am hoping not to be always a stranger. I am new to the superintendent's work and to our part of the state, and the favor will be mine to know so early a man of your prominence. Besides, to tell the truth, I am glad to divide up the cost of that room. I had begun to figure whether I

could get bread and milk three times a day and still have money enough to get home. I am not used to have a waiter expect a quarter every time he catches my eye."

"Doesn't your board pay your expenses?"

"No, indeed. Some of them wanted to deduct from my salary for the time I am away."

Mr. Randolph laughed. "Who is president of your board at Winchendon?"

"Judge Fellows. But he was not one of those who objected to my going. You see we have just become a city, and are broadening out faster than some of the newer members of the board realize. But have your things taken up to the room."

II

The four occupants of No. 208 came up to their room together a little before midnight, and began to discuss the evening session and the men they had met.

"Let us have something to drink," said Mr. Terrill, pushing the button. "I suppose it is this highly spiced cooking, for someway I can't keep my thirst quenched."

"Apollinaris for mine," replied Mr. Parton to Mr. Terrill's nod, as the waiter appeared.

"Apollinaris lemonade," said Mr. Randolph.

"Apollinaris lemonade for me, too," nodded Mr. Eveleth.

"The idea of three grown men ordering Apollinaris in this headquarters of bourbon whiskey," laughed Mr. Terrill. "Well

boy, bring me a quart of Apollinaris so that some of these gentlemen can get a second drink. The fact is," he continued as the darkey disappeared, "I have never seen so little whiskey drunk as right in this Louisville hotel. When I am travelling I drink a great deal, purposely more than at home, and always Apollinaris or White Rock, for I take no chances on local water. I have ordered an Apollinaris split at the bar half a dozen times today, and not once have I heard anybody order a high ball."

When the drinks came Mr. Terrill paid the check, taking out an enormous roll of bills.

"I say, Terrill," laughed Parton, "where did you get all that money? One would think this was in ante-bellum days and

you had come down here heeled to buy niggers."

"There isn't so much there," replied Mr. Terrill modestly. "I estimated my expenses to this meeting at fifty dollars, and so I took three times that. I never want to worry lest I should run short of money."

"Board pays the bills, I suppose?" suggested Mr. Parton.

"Sure thing; they have done that for six years: one of the first to do it."

"I am glad to hear it," said Mr. Randolph. "Our board have been a little slow to fall in, but this year it sends us both."

"I say, Terrill, does your board pay for the half-dozen Apollinaris splits?"

"Why of course, They are travelling

expenses. I shouldn't want them at home."

"And for treating us here?"

"Certainly. I need a drink myself, and I couldn't drink alone, could I?"

"Do you give them an itemized account?"

"They would make fun of me if I attempted it. When I came away I put a hundred and fifty dollars into my pocket besides my return ticket. I get back with say, ninety-five. I charge the board fifty-five, and that is all there is of it."

"Suppose you buy something for yourself, like a new hat?"

"That comes out of my own private money, which I keep separate. The board knows that I am straight, and that when I say I have spent fifty-five dollars on this trip it is a fair statement of what

the trip cost me. It doesn't want me to use time making out an itemized expense account that I might more profitably put into getting new ideas for the school."

"Is your board as liberal as that in regard to the petty expenses of the school?' asked Mr. Randolph.

"Yes, sir. I always have in my safe from one to three hundred dollars for what we call petty cash. Any bills less than ten dollars we pay in money, always taking a receipt, and those receipts are all the record needed. I know boards of education that make out checks for ten cents. I have in my possession a check of the city of New York for 3 cents. I paid the money to a book house for it, and have never cashed it because I preferred to keep it for curiosity. It covers four pages and must have cost the city

a good two dollars in clerk-hire. They have simplified matters there now, but there is still an enormous amount of red tape. How are your people at Winchendon?" he asked, turning to Mr. Eveleth, who was a shy little man and in this company always listened.

"I am new there," he replied, "but there is considerable of what you call red tape. We pay all amounts, even teachers wages, by checks, every one of which is signed by Judge Fellows as well as by me. I never in my life before saw as large an amount of real money as you have in that roll." In his voice there was a wistful envy, the others thought.

"Well, boys, it is time we were snoozing," suggested Mr. Randolph, and they all got to bed.

III

The next morning Mr. Eveleth awoke at his usual six o'clock, and though all the others were sound asleep he decided take a morning walk. So he slipped quietly into the bathroom, made a noiseless toilet, unlocked the door softly and locked it again from the outside, taking the key, as there was another on the bureau. He walked down the main street to the river, turned to the right and followed up the warehouses for a way, then cut down south, and by seven had got quite an idea of the business part of the city. What he wanted for breakfast would be as wholesome at a Baltimore lunch as at the hotel for half the money, so he had his orange and oatmeal and eggs and coffee, and got back to the room while the others were dressing.

But while he was gone something had happened.

When Mr. Terrill pulled down his trousers from the hook on the wall near the door where they were hanging he felt in one pocket after another with a puzzled air, and then looked under his pillow and in the bureau drawers. "I wonder what can have become of that roll of bills," he remarked. "I must have left it in my trouser-pocket."

There was some vain searching and speculating, and then the three men began to look at one another doubtfully.

Finally Mr. Randolph spoke positively: "That money must have been stolen."

"It looks so," admitted Mr. Terrill, "but by whom?"

All three were unwilling to mention their first thought. "Do you suppose any-

body could have reached in through the transom and got hold of those trousers?" asked Mr. Randolph.

It was preposterous but they sent for the house detective.

"A maid has been sitting in that corridor every minute since midnight," he said. "It is well lit, and nobody has passed your door without her seeing him. Nothing has been taken through your transom."

The detective did not inquire whether anybody else had been in the room, and no one of the three thought best to tell him, but they cautioned him not to speak of what had happened. When he was gone Mr. Randolph said gravely, "Of course the same thought is in all our minds, but let me beg of you two gentlemen to keep it unexpressed. If Mr. Eve-

leth took the money he has already disposed of it so that we cannot discover it by searching, as we might have, had we all remained in the room. If he would do a thing so bold, we are not likely to surprise him into confessing it. I suggest that we do not even mention that Mr. Terrill has lost the money. That will surprise Mr. Eveleth more than any other action we could take, and he may betray himself."

The advice seemed good, and they all agreed not to speak of the matter outside, either. So when Mr. Eveleth came in his three room-mates were curious to hear what he would have to say.

IV

"I have much the best of you," he began. "I have had a two-mile walk, seen a good deal of the city, and got my break-

fast for half what you will pay. That counts here, for I have had to buy a new pair of over-shoes. Think of snow in Louisville."

He certainly acted the innocent. Shy as he was, the exhilaration of his walk made him talkative, and he went on to tell what he had seen.

He did not find his companions responsive but he laid that to their having just waked up, and said he would go down stairs to read the morning newspapers. When he was gone the three looked at one another.

"We are not going to be able to recover that money," Mr. Randolph said. "It is plain that he has fully protected himself from detection."

"May be," replied Mr. Terrill resent-

fully, "but I am very much inclined to put the police on it."

"Dangerous and expensive," replied Mr. Randolph, "and always the risk of suit for false imprisonment. Did you know him before you agreed to room with him?"

"No. I was complaining because I could not get a room here and he introduced himself to me and offered to share his with me."

"Precisely the same with us. We do not even know that Eveleth is his name or that he is superintendent at Winchendon. It looks like a confidence game all through. Parton's money is intact and so is mine, but very likely that is only because you happened to show so much that our little piles were not worth meddling with. By the way, Mr. Terrill, we

haven't any more with us than we shall use, but I can cash a check here and shall be glad to let you have any amount you need."

"Thank you," replied Mr. Terrill, "my own check will be good here; in fact I rather think I have all I shall need of my own money in another pocket. But I confess I don't like to give up a hundred and fifty dollars without a struggle."

"You are much more likely to get it back if you say nothing and watch. This chap must think you had not discovered your loss when he came in, and probably went out so soon because he did not want to be present at the explosion."

"May be you are right. But I can't room with him any more. I am going up to the Galt house."

"The sessions of today are those we

particularly wanted to hear and I think Parton and I will go home by the midnight train. That will give us an excuse to get out. See to getting the berths, will you, Parton?"

So that night Mr. Eveleth slept alone in room 208.

V

"Judge," asked Mr. Burbank, walking into Judge Fellows's office one morning, "do you know they are circulating bad stories about Eveleth?"

"About Eveleth? What bad stories? Who is circulating them?"

"The president of the Nashua First national, Mr. Leahry, was here yesterday about some property we are both interested in, and he told me it was reported that Eveleth stole a hundred and fifty dollars from their superintendent, who occupied

the same room at the Louisville meeting."

"Why didn't you let him tell that story to me?"

"I called you up but you were out somewhere; it was about four o'clock and he had to catch the 4:30 train."

"What did you tell him?"

"That there must be some mistake somewhere; Eveleth wasn't that kind of a fellow."

"Where did he get his information?"

"On the quiet from Terrill, the man who lost it."

"Did he accuse Eveleth of taking it?"

"No. Eveleth skipped out of the room an hour before Terrill was awake, and had a chance to dispose of the money. So as he couldn't get it by searching, Terrill kept quiet."

"And tells about it? That may land him in the penitentiary."

"I think he has told only the board, and that confidentially. But Seabury is on the board, and warned me to be on the watch."

"Were Terrill and Eveleth alone in the room?"

"No. The hotel was crowded and they had taken in with them Parton, the superintendent at Nashua, and Randolph, president of the board there."

"I know Parton. You remember we looked him up here when Haskell was made inspector. He hasn't Eveleth's education and culture, but he is straight as a string. He didn't take the money. Know anything about Randolph?"

"O yes. He handles my real estate in Fallula."

"How much have you there?"

"Quite a bit. I took a store there to close up an estate I was executor for and it proved a poor investment. Then Randolph came to see me and told me the rest of the block was to be sold at foreclosure, and that if I would buy it and put ten thousand dollars into improvements he would guarantee me a first-class investment. I did not think much of it or of him, but I let myself be persuaded, and it has netted me a straight seven per cent above all expenses. He handled it so well that I have let him make other investments there for me."

"Ever been there to look them over?"

"No. Fallula is out of the way and I have never got around to going there. But Randolph is all right: good results and prompt remittance."

"Do you know, Burbank, I don't like that man Randolph. He was a witness once in a case before me; smooth and convinced the jury, but the type of man I distrust—bald head, chin whiskers, smooth upper lip, everlasting smile, impressing you with his benevolence. I think I'll run over to Fallula tomorrow and look this matter up a little. Incidentally I will look after your investments there. Send me over a list of them tonight."

VI

Judge Fellows called first on Mr. Parton, who of course remembered him and was honored to receive him.

"Mr. Parton," he said, coming at once to the point, "somebody is spreading the story that our man Eveleth stole a hundred and fifty dollars from his room-mate at a Louisville hotel."

"Has that got out?" Mr. Parton asked in surprise. "I give you my word that I have never mentioned it to anybody not in the room at the time."

"You have no doubt that Eveleth took it, then?"

"I am sure Terrill had the money, for I saw it the night before; and that it was gone in the morning, for I helped him search. I know I did not take it myself, and of course Mr. Randolph is above suspicion. Eveleth got up an hour earlier than the rest of us and slipped out of the room without awaking anybody. There doesn't seem to be much room for doubt."

"Why didn't you accuse him of it and give him a chance to defend himself?"

"No doubt we should have done it and insisted that we all be searched, had he

been in the room when we waked up. But after he had gone out and had opportunity to stow away the money, what good would it do to accuse him? A man who will steal will lie, and in this case we could not prove he took it."

"That disposal of the case does not sound like the conclusion of young men. Who suggested it?"

"Mr. Randolph. He said a charge like should never be made unless it can be proved. It might get us into trouble and it would not recover the money. Besides, he pointed out what a blight it would be on Eveleth, a young fellow like him, to know that he was suspected of being a thief."

"Is it more of a blight to be suspected of being a thief than to be one?"

"In a way, yes. He might have yielded

to sudden temptation—he looked mighty wistfully at that bunch of money the night before; and if he thought himself unsuspected might repent and reform. But if he saw the suspicion in every man's eye he would become hardened, and think it was of no use to mend: his reputation would be already gone."

"That, too, was Mr. Randolph's suggestion, I suppose."

"Yes, Judge Fellows, Mr. Randolph is a genuine philanthropist. Where others give money he gives time and thought and sagacity."

"Incidentally I suppose he usually distributes the money others give."

"Often, yes. He can give like Hamlet, with words that make the gifts more rich. He sometimes says it is his aim to make every person he meets happier,

so that his path may be traced through the town like that of the sunlight by the more cheerful faces he leaves behind."

"Very pretty: reminds me of a girl who came home from college determined to be such a sunshine in the home she would fade the carpets. She ran away with her father's chauffer."

VII

Before calling on Mr. Randolph Judge Fellows looked up one by one Mr. Burbank's investments. He whistled softly to himself over some of them but over one of them he swore. A German cobbler had bought a little building and given a mortgage for a thousand dollars. Judge Fellows called on him and asked if the interest was not over due.

"Interest?" exclaimed the cobbler, "I haf pay him up."

"The thousand dollars?"

"Sure. I pay Mr. Randolph more as tree year off."

"Did you get a release?"

"Vot is dose, a release? You mean receipt? Yaw, I haf receipt."

He hunted it up and showed it. It was dated three years back, yet Mr. Randolph had sent the interest to Mr. Burbank every six months.

He had learned from Mr. Burbank that Mr. Randolph drew his checks on the First National bank, so Judge Fellows called on the president, an old schoolmate.

"Sinclair," he said, "tell me about this man Randolph."

"On the level?"

"Underneath."

"Well, Judge, Randolph still keeps a smiling face to the public but he is not

what we bankers call a good risk. He handles a good deal of money but he handles it on a shockingly narrow margin. I will wager his balance here today is less than ten dollars, and that there are checks for five hundred out. So far he has always managed to meet them before they got in here, but he is liable any time to slip up. He keeps an account with the Second National in Ipswich, and checks between us back and forth. So far the checks have proved good, but neither of us would let him draw out on check upon the other without telephoning first. He is sometimes in desperately hard straits. The board voted to send him and Parton to a meeting down south somewhere and to pay their expenses, but of course did not advance the money: under the rules the money had to be spent first and the

bills brought in. An hour before they were to start he came to me in distress with an itemized account of just what he should have to spend, and begged me to let him have it with an order on the board for security. I did it, reluctantly, but it shows how a man who handles a great many thousand dollars may sometimes find it impossible to raise fifty without humiliation."

"Isn't such a man liable to go beyond humiliation to dishonesty?"

"Yes. We even quietly look up the signatures on the accomodation notes he gives us. We require two names each independently good for the amount, for we don't think Randolph's security of any value."

"I should think you would close him out."

"We should be glad to, but it would involve so many decent people in trouble that we are carrying him along for the present."

VI

Judge Fellows had made sure Mr. Randolph would be in his office at two o'clock, and he called upon him. He observed with malicious satisfaction that Mr. Randolph was worrying over his bank account, but he accosted him pleasantly. "You are president of the board of education here, I believe," he said. "I occupy that position at Winchendon, and I should like to consult you."

Mr. Randolph had looked apprehensive when the judge entered, but at this friendly greeting be beamed effusively. "Any help I can give you will be most gladly given," he said.

"A disturbing rumor has come to us that our new superintendent is dishonest: in fact, that he stole a sum of money from a room-mate at a hotel in Louisville. I am told that you were present and know the circumstances."

"I am very sorry the fact has leaked out," replied Mr. Randolph. "I have not mentioned it, and I cautioned Mr. Parton not to speak of it. I hope the source of your information was not here."

"No, it did not come from here: it came from Nashua."

"Then Mr. Terrill must have told it. I had hoped he would be more charitable toward a brother superintendent. I am afraid it will ruin Mr. Eveleth's career."

"We certainly cannot keep him if the allegation is true. You think there can be no doubt of it?"

"Why none of us saw him take it," replied Mr. Randolph with transparent candor. "We were all asleep when he went out of the room. But we all saw the roll of money, and we all made sure that it was not in the room after Mr. Eveleth slipped out. The evidence is circumstantial, but it is unusually complete."

"Then you are sure in your own mind that he took the money?"

"Why, one can never be positive where he has not seen the deed committed, but there seems to be no reasonable doubt."

"And you yourself believe Mr. Eveleth took that money?"

Mr. Randolph saw that he was being pinned down to a definite answer and he yielded. "Yes," he said, "I believe he took it."

The judge looked at him curiously "It is still a little difficult even for you to tell a plain, unevasive lie," he said.

Mr. Randolph jumped to his feet "If you were not an old man and in my room—" he began.

"Who is your family physician?" asked the judge quietly.

"What has that to do with this case?—Dr. Hitchcock," he added sullenly.

"Has Dr. Hitchcock never told you that you have apoplectic tendencies. That a man of your thick neck, large appetite, and constant worry is subject to hardening of the arteries, and if he lets himself fly into a passion is likely to die suddenly?'

Mr. Randolph's jaw fell in abject terror. "No, he never told me that," he said.

"It is true, and in this interview, which

is by no means ended yet, you had better keep calm. Now let us waste no time over denials. You took the money. A young man looks for evidence in circumstances. I have been on the bench twenty-odd years and I have learned to look for evidence in character. The three young superintendents in your room at Louisville are of character above suspicion. Your character is a hypocritical sham."

"Judge Fellows—"

"Remember my caution. You have a good deal to listen to yet and it is of vital importance to you to keep calm. Not to waste time I may as well tell you that I am the friend and counsel of Mr. Burbank. Last night he gave me the details of every investment he has made here through you. Today I have looked every one of

them up. Fourteen months ago you raised the rents of the stores in the Cuyler block. You have collected the increased rent but you have remitted to Mr. Burbank at the old figure."

"I was going to arrange that—"

"More than three years ago you collected a thousand dollars on a mortgage and have never reported it, still paying the interest as though it had not been paid."

"I should like to explain—"

"Though it is so heavily mortgaged that at forced sale the bank would have to bid it in, you still have some equity in your residence property. I have a deed of that property to Mr. Burbank ready for your signature. I am a notary public and will attest it. Fortunately for her, the wife who would once have had to

sign this deed with you is no longer here to witness your disgrace."

"But I have a daughter, Judge Fellows. Let me send for her and when you see her you will not make this public. She is a beautiful girl, and in a month she is to marry one of the finest and wealthiest young men in the county. When he is my son-in-law my troubles will be over. Don't, don't spoil her chances. If this must come out, wait six weeks, I beg of you," and Mr. Randolph actually knelt at the judge's feet and clasped his hands in supplication.

"You did not seem anxious to save the reputation of young Eveleth."

"You don't know the pressure I was under Judge. Things have been going badly with me, but I felt that I must make a good showing till this marriage

came off. The money wasn't Terrill's own: it belonged to the board and they would simply add it to their budget the next year."

The judge could hardly resist the temptation to spurn with his foot the wretch grovelling at his feet. "But how about Eveleth? The board could not put his reputation and career into its next budget."

"I thought I had fixed it so that no one of the three would mention it, out of sympathy for Eveleth. I had not the least ill-will toward him."

"Get up, get up. It is impossible to argue with a man absolutely without moral basis to build on. Sign this deed and then come over to the bank. Mr. Seabury will be expecting us, and I telephoned Terrill to meet us. You must

make written acknowledgement before us that you stole the money, and you must return it. We may not think best to make the facts public at present. You have involved so many worthy persons in your finances, through your religious and charitable associations, that we may perhaps let you go for a while under Mr. Sinclair's close supervision till we can relieve them from responsibility. But we shall take written confessions before us three as witnesses, and if you ever stray again from the street that is called straight you will know what to expect."

"I will do anything you ask, Judge Fellows, if only my daughter's marriage may be permitted to take place."

"That is a matter we will talk over. We will make it as easy for her as we can in justice to the young man. A good

deal depends on the sort of chap he is. Come over to the bank and we will consider it."

VII

There was a long conference, as the result of which the three thought they had done all that was possible to give Mr. Randolph a chance to recover himself, but when Judge Fellows opened his newspaper the next morning he was confronted by these big headlines:

FLED TO CANADA

Fallula's most prominent philanthropist absconds

Put off at Buffalo

PUT OFF AT BUFFALO

I

The rivalry between Emory Scott and Moses Briggs was county talk. They were principals of two schools that competed for what little "foreign tuition" there was in the vicinity, and they spared neither themselves nor each other. If you asked Moses about Updowndale he would answer that of course Mr. Scott could not hope to do more than apply an electric battery occasionally to see whether the town was wholly dead so that it was safe to bury it. If you asked Emory about Chuckville school he would reply that Mr. Briggs was doing all that could

be expected of a community that had sprung up like a mushroom and of which nobody was quite sure as yet whether it wasn't a toadstool.

Either might have been elected superintendent except for the other, but the delegates of each were so bitterly opposed to the election of the other that both sets united in favor of Constance Niles, a Vassar graduate whose parents lived in the district but who was teaching near New York. She was not a candidate and at first refused the nomination, but when her parents began to realize what it would mean to have their daughter at home again they brought such pressure to bear upon her that she could not resist, and she was elected with only nominal opposition.

II

Neither of the two principals thought of her as more than a girl, or expected any attempt to criticise their schools. When Moses was notified that his list of library books must be sent to her for approval before the state duplicated upon them he did it formally, expecting her signature to be affixed with as little consideration as though it were a rubber stamp. When she called at the school and said she should like to talk the list over with him he was much surprised, but still supposed it was only because she was a new broom making special effort to sweep clean.

But her questions proved difficult. "I see you have some twenty different publishers," she said, "and the prices are the retail prices. Are these all the ori-

ginal editions, purchased from the publishers?"

"Why, certainly," he replied unhesitatingly; "you see the names after each book."

"Yes," she replied, "but it struck me as strange that every one of these books is republished by Crossit and Gumlap in fifty-cent editions, which may be had in quantities as low as thirty-five cents. If you bought the original editions these prices are right; if you bought the Crossit and Gumlap editions and the state should duplicate it would pay you seventy-five cents as half for what you bought for fifty cents or less. Is it just a coincidence that every book here is a Crossit and Gumlap?"

"I never heard of Crossit and Gumlap," replied Moses. "We bought all these

books direct from the publishers."

"O you have bought them then," said Miss Niles. "Will you let me see them?"

"They have been ordered but they haven't come yet," replied Moses glibly.

Miss Niles was not satisfied. "Have you the bills?" she asked.

"Why no, they haven't come yet."

"Will you let me see your library?" Miss Niles spoke with decision. She was not to be trifled with.

Moses led the way and began to explain. There the books were, every one of them a Crossit and Gumlap edition. His excuses were lame and finally he made a breast of it. "The fact is," he said, "I happened to be at Loeser's store in Brooklyn when they were selling these books at forty cents each, and I thought it was too good a chance to lose. But they are

just as good as the original editions, so I called them originals and charged up the difference to my expenses. If I hadn't been down there I shouldn't have thought of it and we should have bought the originals, so nobody is the loser."

"If you will make out a new application, giving the correct name of the publishers, and the prices at forty cents each, I will approve it," Miss Niles said curtly, and Moses had to do it.

It amused him very much. "Ain't she the cute cross-questioner?" he chuckled to himself. "Who would think of that mite of a girl facing me down? Say, why wouldn't that be the kind of girl to marry? She isn't rich, but teachers have a mighty poor chance with heiresses. Besides she is an only child and her father has a farm worth ten thousand dollars if

it is worth a cent. I believe I'll make her my wife."

He began to lay his plans. It was one of his maxims of life that any man could win any woman if he was only persistent enough, and his notion of persistence involved methods direct if not violent. He believed modern women had a good deal of the Sabines in them, and he proposed to show Miss Niles that he was bound to have her and that she might as well give in first as last.

III

Miss Niles was asked by the Department to visit the Updowndale school. The board had petitioned that it be approved for foreign tuition under the state, and she was to see if it had sufficient library and apparatus. She found there was no question as to the library. It was some-

what out of date, but the number of books was so large and their quality so high that it deserved approval.

The apparatus presented more difficulty. There was a lot of it, kept in big glass cases in the laboratory, as it was called, and she found it in prime condition, every piece of brass shining, and the glass plates clear in the absence of dust. Emory took pains to show her how much he used it, what a distinct spark the electric wheel made, how evenly the set of pulleys ran, of what beautiful wood the Atwood's machine was constructed. But when she came to inquire for the modern pieces they were lacking.

"How much has been expended for apparatus in the five years you have been here?" she asked.

He hesitated a moment as if calculating.

"More than two hundred dollars, including repairs," he replied.

Miss Niles looked at him doubtfully, and then said, "I shall have to think about it," and rather hurried away.

There was not a more miserable man in Norfolk county than Emory Scott. He had lied to Miss Niles, and she knew he had lied. He had framed the answer so as to equivocate, and before he uttered it he thought it was literally true. But when he spoke it and her clear eyes looked into his he knew he had lied, lied contemptibly, and been judged by it. He saw now to what degree his eagerness to push the school ahead had driven him. The end did not justify the means. No end justified a lie. He had never before so despised himself.

One thing was sure, he must wipe that

lie off the calendar without delay. The moment school was out he started to walk to Miss Niles's home, twelve miles away. He might have crossed to the nearest station and gone around by rail, but he was in no mood to wait. He made a straight four miles an hour, and entered Miss Niles's house just as she was rising from supper.

She was surprised to see him, but did not urge him when he refused to eat and went with him to the parlor.

He wasted no time. "Miss Niles," he said, "I lied to you this morning and I couldn't rest till I had owned up. The board hasn't spent a dollar for apparatus since I have been there. The village is poor. Business has moved away, we are off the railroad, our school tax is two per cent when pared down to the rind. That

is why I am so anxious to get the school approved for free tuition. Twenty dollars a year isn't much, but from twenty pupils it would be four hundred dollars, enough to make the difference between grinding poverty and some little possibility of occasional purchases. But we haven't been able to buy apparatus. I have worked hard over what we have. I have put more than four hundred hours out of school time in polishing it up and keeping it in working order. I said to myself that I might call my time worth fifty cents an hour, and so I phrased it 'purchases and repairs'. But there hasn't been a new piece bought or a dollar spent except for a few little necessities I paid for out of my pocket. I lied to you, and I am more ashamed and repentant than you will readily believe."

He stood with head hung low, but Miss Niles thought as she looked at him dusty and begrimed with his long walk that he was the first real hero she had ever seen. She sought out his hand and held it in both hers. "I suspected you were making some such excuse to yourself for what you said," she told him. "It wasn't true and it disappointed me. But you have more than made up for it. You couldn't tell me anything now that I shouldn't believe beyond question. And I am going to recommend that your school be approved. The man is more than the machinery."

She persuaded him to take supper after all, and while he made himself presentable she herself cooked him a cheese fondue that seemed to him the most delicious food he ever tasted. In spite of his protest she

got out her mare and drove him back to Updowndale. They talked only of school matters, but when he got out of the wagon they shook hands again, and Miss Niles said to herself as she drove home, "I must keep away from Updowndale."

IV

When Constance Niles was ten years old she spent an unhappy afternoon with herself. She sat fronting the looking-glass and she went over her face feature by feature and then as a whole. She could not find a single attraction, not even the 'sort of something' that lovers talk of when unable to give details. No, she was homely, negatively unattractive, no one feature so very bad but no one pleasing, the general effect common-place and uninteresting. Whatever success she won

in life she must win independently of good looks.

She was a girl of character, and when once she had reached this conclusion she spent no time mourning over it. Evidently she must make up in other ways for what nature had denied her. First of all, she would try to be a good girl, to do what was right. Then she would be considerate of others. As one way to be considerate she would try to be bright so as not to bore people. She had heard that the art of conversation was to know what it is conventional to say and then say something else. She practised that with some success. But she found she got the best results by always being interested in what the other person said, and she made quite an art of that.

The result of all this aim and effort was to make her an agreeable girl, always welcome and liked. In college, where she expected to be only among those present, she was surprised and sometimes astonished at the recognition she got. When in senior year she was elected class president she was so overwhelmed as to be incredulous.

An excellent place to teach had opened to her, where she was so successful and happy that she was reluctant to give it up for this new office. Even here she was getting some evidence that she could do her work well.

But of one thing she was assured, she must have no love-making in her programme. There wasn't likely to be any: popular as she was with her girl associates, men had never seemed attracted to her.

But if by chance any mushy young man should think himself sentimental because she happened to come near him, she must set him about his business summarily.

As she rode home from Updowndale and thought of that manly fellow and that lingering handshake, she resolved that the less often she saw Emory Scott the better. She had read about girls feeling that way but she had never experienced it before. She must put it altogether out of her mind. For five years the one thing she must remember was that she was a district superintendent.

V

Through the influence of Miss Niles the schools of her district were permitted to close during the meeting of the State teachers association at Buffalo. Moses considered this his great opportunity.

When Miss Niles took the train Moses was the first one to greet her, when the seat beside her was vacated he took it, he insisted upon carrying her bag to the car and accompanying her to the hotel.

Nothing could have been more disagreeable to her, and she gave him a hundred hints that would have pierced a less elephantine hide. But nothing short of a blow between the eyes could have held him back from his purpose, and he announced that he would call for her to go to the evening meeting, getting away before she could refuse.

She was in perplexity. There would be five thousand teachers at the meeting and he would insist on parading before them to a front seat. It happened that there were no women at the convention whom she could enlist as a committee of

defence, and she was even deliberating whether to stay away and miss Dr. Finegan's address. Just then Emory Scott appeared. They had not met since the night she drove him to Updowndale and he would have passed her with a bow had she not called him, on the impulse of the moment.

He was glad to be summoned and showed it, which added to her distrust of herself, but the need was urgent.

"Mr. Scott," she said, "I am going to make a confidant of you as a woman seldom does of a man."

"I am glad you feel that you may trust me," he said.

"I am proving that I know it. This meeting is being made miserable for me by Mr. Briggs, who forces himself upon me

as an escort. He won't take hints. If I am summary he will be demonstrative. Can you keep him away from me without making a scene?"

"I am only afraid I shall take too much personal satisfaction in doing it," he replied grimly. "You may depend upon it that Mr. Briggs will not address you again."

How he would have liked to go on to ask permission to be by her side to guard her, but spite of her forgiveness he still felt that he had once lied to her and that he must keep at a humble distance. So when she thanked him for his assurance he bowed and went away. She looked at him a bit wistfully as he disappeared down the corridor.

"After all, it is better so," she said.

VI

Emory was puzzled as to how he should execute his mission. The simplest way would be to grab Moses by the coat-collar and kick him out of the hotel, but that was impracticable. It would produce just the notoriety Miss Niles wanted to avoid. Besides, for him, five feet eleven to attack Moses, five feet six, would be cowardly. Bodily strength must be employed only in an emergency. He must get Moses out of the way by some sort of strategy.

While he was trying to evolve a scheme a man approached him and asked, "Is this Principal Scott of Updowndale?"

"At your service."

"How are you going to vote for president?"

It sounded inquisitive from a stranger, but Emory replied, "I hadn't thought about that. There is a committee on nominations, isn't there?"

"Yes, but it is packed. This time the Association is going to have a free vote and repudiate the committee's action. Get in on the band-wagon and vote for Darius Watts."

"Who is he?"

"You see him over there, talking with the man in the corner. He is superintendent of schools in Orange, and he has brought a lot of his teachers with him. He is going to win hands down."

Emory had utter contempt for office-seekers, but he had long ago learned to listen; it gave him points that might be useful. "I don't see why I should feel

interested in Mr. Watts's election," he said.

"We want to beat the ring. If you will come with us we will see that you get some good thing among the appointments next year. How would you like to be on the committee on resolutions?"

Just then Moses appeared at the end of the lobby. "There is the man that can help you," said Emory, pointing him out and suddenly conceiving a scheme that would protect Miss Niles. "If you will see that he is nominated for vice-president he will work for you tooth and nail."

"What, that little runt vice-president," exclaimed the runner. "We couldn't quite go that."

"For that matter your man isn't much of a looker," replied Emory, glancing at the button-holer in the corner. "You

will have to offer Briggs something pretty good to command his services." The possibilities were rapidly developing in Emory's mind. He remembered how the Kilkenny cats swallowed each other, and here was a providential clothes line.

"How many votes can he carry?" asked the runner, doubtfully.

"There are seventy-eight teachers in our district and all are free to close their schools and come here. Only nineteen have come. Offer him enough to make it worth while and Mr. Briggs will go back this afternoon and get the rest of them here tomorrow. You won't find many men who can deliver eighty votes."

The more the project grew in his mind the more Emory enjoyed it. Moses was inordinately greedy of office. Once at the county association he was nominated

successively for every place on the ticket, and when he had been defeated for every one of them the retiring president for a joke proposed a new office, assistant secretary, and Moses accepted the nomination for that. He was elected amid shouts of laughter, and was insufferably elated over it. If he saw the vice-presidency of this big association in view with his name in all the newspapers, he would rush back to the district, canvas all night, and if necessary pay the fares and dues of the teachers out of his own pocket. He would be so eager that he would forget Miss Niles and leave her in peace.

It worked just as he expected. The two men met and discussed a few minutes, and presently Moses rushed to the train. Miss Niles was safe.

Should he offer to accompany her him-

self? No, he might be as unwelcome as Moses. He had saved Miss Niles from one intruder, and would not himself prove another. So he went to her and told her Mr. Briggs had been called back to the district and would not be in Buffalo that evening. He did not explain how it happened, and just then Miss Niles did not ask. She remarked that she could now accept an invitation to go with people at her table. She had not been able to tell them finally till she was sure Mr. Briggs would not make a disturbance. She said it a little wistfully. A man with more confidence would have seen that she was telling him she had made no engagement to go with any one else. But he expressed his gratification that she was provided for, and went himself alone.

VII

The next day a carload of teachers got on at Chuckville. Moses had drummed them up successfully. He had assured them that they would be in time to vote and to take an automobile ride in the afternoon, which was really all of the meeting they would care about. He marshalled them to the hall and filled three long seats with them. He had told them that he was to be a vice-president, and already assumed an official relation to the meeting.

But things were not going just right. The city superintendent was chairman of the nominating committee and when he presented his report he gave as one reason for selecting the man named the fact that he was not a seeker for the office. This

was so heartily applauded that the friends of Darius Watts did not even present his name. When action on the report was called for only one poor little woman over in the corner who had not quite kept up with the proceedings called out a feeble no.

Moses was indignant and sought out the runner who had promised him so much. He was nowhere to be found: in fact it was difficult to find anybody who would admit having been in favor of the self-seeker who had been publicly rebuked. The teachers whom Moses had gathered complained that he had got them there under false pretences, and when they found that the invitation for the automobile rides did not include them they kept him so busy explaining that he forgot Miss Niles entirely, and she re-

turned to her home undisturbed by him.

It happened some way, he did not know just how for he would not have presumed so much, that Emory sat with Miss Niles on the journey back, and she insisted on knowing how he had disposed of her troublesome follower. He told the story rather reluctantly, but with increasing enjoyment as he saw how fully she entered into the humor of it.

VIII

What followed? How can I tell? All this happened only last November. Keep watch yourself.

TRIED AND FOUND WANTING

TRIED AND FOUND WANTING

I

Deacon Gage had been trustee of the Boylston district since the mind of man knoweth not to the contrary. Originally he was sole trustee, but when it became a union school district and a board of education was necessary, he made the board three, and saw that the grocer and the postmaster were the other two members, so that if board action was necessary he could summon a special meeting in the postmaster's back office and call in the grocer from next door.

He was an intelligent trustee. He took school journals, attended teachers meetings, dropped into associations, kept track

of current talk and thought. He knew the Code of Public Instruction as ministers know their bible, and lawyers in the county who had a school case came to Deacon Gage to find out what the statute was.

He saw that the schoolhouse was in prime order and well equipped. There was hardly a day when he did not go through at least some of the rooms. The children all knew him and liked him, and considered his authority far above that of the principal, who was indeed little more than the deacon's deputy.

II

This may have been partly from the deacon's method of selecting principals. He did not believe in teachers agencies. In their early days he had thought the idea an excellent one, and had applied to one for assistance. But it was so zealous

to fill the place it notified scores of men, and the railroad might have run excursion trains of applicants. Thereafter the deacon kept prospective vacancies quiet, and inserted in the Ipswich newspaper the following advertisement:

"Wanted in a small country village, a principal for a school of six teachers. Salary $800. Address Y 31, *Herald* Office."

The replies were forwarded to him, he selected those which seemed to him most eligible, and wrote to them one by one to come to Boylston, till he had made his selection. He paid the travelling expenses of those rejected, and considered this the cheapest as well as the most effective way of securing teachers. Usually the new man was engaged before the present incumbent was informed that he

could not remain, so when information agencies and peripatetic place-seekers sought to fill vacancies in the school Deacon Page took grim satisfaction in saying that all teachers had been engaged for the ensuing year.

Of course this did not bring him a high type of principal: such men are not watching advertisements for teachers in country newspapers. But he got men who had legal qualifications and a record of respectability, and he chose men that agreed with him and were likely to. On the whole he felt complacent over his system.

III

"Can you direct me to Mr. Gage's?" asked a young man who got off the train at Boylston, one afternoon.

"He lives about a mile down the road," replied the station agent; "that's his

daughter Patrishy jest druv up: very likely lookin for ye."

Patricia was approaching and heard this. "Yes," she said, "father sent me down to drive you home."

"Good for you, Patricia," he exclaimed, seizing her about the waist and kissing her full on the lips.

The attack was so sudden and so unexpected that the deed was done before she had a chance to defend herself, but the moment she recovered her senses she gave him a cuff on the cheek that left him in no doubt as to her indignation.

"Why, Patricia," he started to expostulate; but she courtesied with sarcasm. "Miss Gage, if you please," she corrected him.

"Then I am to call your father Mr. Gage?"

"Deacon Gage, he is commonly addressed."

"So you are a deacon's daughter. Now I am a minister's son: that is a dangerous combination."

"Not a very close combination. I am merely sent here to drive you to the house."

"I shall be prouder to ride with you than in a king's chariot."

How impudent he was, and yet Patricia could not be angry with him. She hoped he would not find out she was not angry with him. He was such a change from the little half-baked principals who had been coming year after year. His clothes fitted, his hair was lately trimmed, he was freshly shaven, he was Sidney Smith's nice person, with the effect upon the mind

which soft air and a fine climate have upon the body.

IV

When they reached the house the deacon was at the door. "You see I have brought him, father," said Patricia.

"Glad to see you," said Deacon Gage heartily. "Supper is just ready. Let's sit right down."

The deacon was too hospitable to begin examining the new candidate at meal-time, so he allowed the conversation to run in unprofessional channels, though of course he directed it himself; he never allowed his teachers to take the initiative. He was pleased with the fellow. He began to think it might be well to exact more than he had previously in the matter of attire and address. He realized when he contrasted this new applicant

with the present incumbent how true it is that manners maketh man. He would like to have this bright, alert, well-poised, well-bred man in the teacher's chair, to set the pace in these matters for the young boys growing up. Before the meal was ended he had practically decided to engage him.

After supper he drew up chairs for both on the back porch and began his pedagogical examination. He introduced it cleverly.

"A curious question in school law came up to-day," he said. "I should like to have your judgment."

"What I don't know about school law would make a first-class text-book," replied the young man, "but I shall be glad to hear about it."

"Over in Ashburnham they have in-

troduced vocal music: you know the regents require it now. A Miss Purtill, who has taught the fifth grade there five years had no knowledge of music: in fact claimed she could not distinguish one tune from another. So when it came to engaging teachers it was agreed that she should prepare herself in music, and this clause was added to the contract that she and the board signed: 'It is hereby agreed and made a part of this contract that the said Miss Purtill shall attend the entire session of the summer school held by the publishers of the International music series at Worcester, Mass.'"

"Well?"

"Miss Purtill did not attend the summer school and the board knew it. So at the opening of the fall term the superintendent met her at the door. 'Did you

attend the music summer school?' he asked. 'No,' she replied. 'Then your contract is broken and you cannot teach in this school,' he said. 'I present myself to teach here by legal advice,' she replied. 'Your lawyer has not steered you straight,' the superintendent said; 'you cannot teach here.' 'I shall present myself every morning.' she insisted. 'Every morning you will be turned away,' the superintendent assured her. And there the case stands. She comes to the schoolhouse every morning, the superintendent refuses to let her enter, and she goes away again, sure she can collect her salary. What do you think of it?"

"She can collect."

"But she did not keep her contract."

"She is keeping the legal part of her contract. The board had no more author-

ity to compel her to attend a certain summer school than to compel her to board with one of the trustees or buy her gowns at a certain store."

"Then the entire contract is void."

"No, only the part that is against public policy."

"It isn't against public policy for her to be able to teach singing."

"If she has no ear for music it is, most decidedly."

"Musicians say that is only lack of education: that every one can recognize musical intervals and follow them when properly trained."

"In a six weeks summer school? As well learn to dance through a correspondence school. Deliver me from hearing her direct her pupils. Besides it is

against public policy for a teacher to attend any summer school."

"I cannot agree with you there. The teacher is fit for her place only so long as she is growing. She has little chance during the year: she has so much to do that she can barely keep along with her work. But when summer comes and her routine duties cease she can go to school herself with only the duties of a pupil."

"In other words when the overworked teacher is worn out, instead of letting her recuperate you put her into a new tread-mill."

"It doesn't seem a tread-mill. Our teachers come home from summer school telling what a good time they have had."

"So they do from a dance, which is no worse dissipation. What teachers want in summer is rest. If I were superin-

tendent I would fine a teacher for every time she thought of school from June to September."

"My young friend," said the deacon indulgently, "you forget that the greatest power in teaching is momentum. So long as the teacher is herself learning she has the motion of progress and carries her pupils along with her. When she stops learning she is no longer advancing herself and can no longer carry her pupils along with her."

"I believe in the teacher's momentum, but it should be the momentum of growth and health and force. Our teachers are worked down so fine in term time that they go stale, and if you work them in vacation too, no wonder they are such an anaemic, forceless, bedraggled lot of worn-out have-beens."

"My young friend, rest is change of occupation. You work harder at tennis than at your regular tasks, and yet it rests you because it occupies different energies. So the summer school rests the teacher because it changes her relation from teacher to pupil."

"When I play tennis I forget that there is any such thing as my regular work. When your teacher is working in summer school her one underlying thought is how she can use what she is absorbing in her classes. How old are the women teachers in your school?"

"We aim to have the average age twenty-five. We do not employ women younger than twenty-two or keep them after they are thirty. It seems to us wise to have fresh and growing women, who still have the enthusiasm of youth."

"Exactly: I wish all school boards were as sensible. If only all the teachers in the public schools were fresh and growing and full of enthusiasm. But how do you keep yours so? By turning them off as soon as you have overworked the freshness and enthusiasm out of them. Why should a woman be old at thirty? A man of thirty is only approaching his prime; a woman at thirty should just begin to be an all-around good teacher. You don't work a horse twelve months in a year: you turn him out to grass in summer, and he comes back a new creature. Turn your teachers out to grass. Let them have two months of air and sunlight with no duties or routine, and see how your schoolrooms will be lit up in September."

"You talk as if our teachers could spend the summer at the Lake Placid club, or

at Newport, or in the Alps. With them it is a question of going to a summer school and having a good time or staying at home and washing dishes."

"Why shouldn't you pay your teachers enough so that they can go to Lake Placid or to Europe in the summer? The colleges are learning that it pays to give their professors every seventh year off, with half or full pay, so that they can go abroad and rest and enlarge their horizon."

"We pay our teachers more than we can afford now. The people complain of the taxes at every school meeting."

"What you can afford is entirely a matter of notion. What do you pay your grade teachers now?"

"Ten dollars a week."

"Forty years ago corresponding teach-

ers would have been glad to get three dollars a week. Forty years from now they may get thirty dollars a week. You will never have the school you ought to have till you pay enough to make the teacher free from worry how she shall pay for a new pair of gloves or a vacation trip."

Her father's voice had sounded through the window suspiciously high, and Patricia came out upon the porch. She stood behind her father's chair, leaned an elbow on each shoulder, reached over and touched her cheek to his forehead, and said, "Daddy, isn't this too warm a discussion for a June night? Our guest has been travelling. Suppose we go into the dining room and have some ice cream."

V

When the young man had gone to bed, Deacon Gage said, "Well, of all the opin-

ionated, obstinate fellows I ever saw—"

"Now father, I do like to see one teacher who dares say his soul is his own."

"But his ideas are so preposterous—"

"Father, didn't you see that he didn't really mean all that? It was pure dialectic. One doesn't often get a chance to argue with an opponent as skilful as you, and he was making the best of it."

"Perhaps that was it," said the deacon, kissing his daughter; "I did have rather the better of him."

VI

So the next morning, feeling that his hospitality should have restrained him more the previous evening, Deacon Gage was warmly courteous to the young man, and it was not till breakfast was well along that he resumed the argument.

"In thinking over what we said last night," he began, "it seemed to me that perhaps we were not so far apart after all, only we were approaching the matter from different standpoints. Suppose we begin at the foundation and see how far we are in accord. Then when we come to the point where we begin to differ we can start the argument there. You will agree of course that education is indispensable."

"By no means."

"What?" The deacon's tone was impatient. "You don't believe that the masses must be educated?"

"Not as the public schools are educating them now."

"They must know how to read, mustn't they?"

"Reading does them precious little good."

"They read the newspapers."

"Yes, *The New York American*, with all the details of murder cases. What little time they have before and after work they give to cheap journals, instead of seeing what is about them and enjoying what nature provides. People don't see sunsets now-a-days: they read about the Thaw murder."

"It is quite evident that you and I can not get on together," said the deacon, "so here is five dollars to pay your travelling expenses back."

"But I am quite accustomed to pay my own travelling expenses," replied the stranger, declining the money with an amused smile.

"No, you must take it; it is our custom

here," insisted the deacon with an air of finality.

"Very well," the young man said, accepting it, and turning to the maid he handed it over. "Here, Catherine," he said, "take this in token of my appreciation of your most excellent breakfast."

"My daughter will drive you to the station," said the astonished and indignant deacon.

"No, I won't trouble her," the guest replied. "my bag is light and a mile walk is none too much after breakfast."

When he was gone the deacon said, "Well, we are well rid of him."

"I don't know," replied Patricia wistfully.

VII

Half an hour later a telegraph boy came strolling down the road. "These two

messages came yesterday," he said, "but I had the stomach-ache and there warn't nobody else around to send."

Patricia seized them and without waiting for her father, to whom they were addressed, read:

"Ipswich, July 14, 1911

"Have hired out at nine hundred, so I won't apply as proposed.

"Wesley B. Hogarth"

"Then who was the man who came yesterday?" inquired Patricia to herself in apprehension. She soon discovered.

"New York, July 14, 1911

"Just landed and shall reach you this afternoon. Love to Patricia.

"Ned"

He was her only cousin, son of the United States minister to Belgium, home for the first visit in a dozen years.

Just then the whistle of the departing train came echoing over the fields.

"And we have no way to discover his American address," sighed Patricia. "I hadn't seen him since we were mites of children, and I had romanced over him."

The Cashier's Prophecy

THE CASHIER'S PROPHECY

I

It was accident that made Cyril Mead a printer. He had encouraged his school to publish a monthly journal, and had found the one local printing office so inefficiently managed that he had more and more assumed direction. He had learned to lock up forms, to correct proof, to set type, even to do presswork when help was scarce. The work fascinated him. He kept improving the makeup of his school paper till it had become a thing of beauty. Pamphlet work charmed him still more. He issued a catalogue that brought praise and inquiry, and he got out little booklets for the school that

were gems. The art preservative was to him an avocation more alluring than any vocation to which he had yet felt himself summoned.

So when about the end of a school year the proprietor proposed to sell him the office at a low price, on easy terms, to be paid for out of the profits, he thought he had found his niche. The cashier of the bank, who was also a member of the board of education, advised against it.

"You are a born teacher," he said, "and no real teacher ever made a good business man."

"I have known teachers who went into business and succeeded," Cyril protested.

"There are some kinds of business that will carry along any decent man," the cashier replied, "and there are some men so big and broad and true that they will

do fairly well at anything that they take up, even teaching. But the real teacher and the real business man are built diversely; they fit different holes, and you can't interchange them. The teacher is an idealist, and ought to be. He is always reaching higher, higher, and dreaming of a still higher. The business man keeps his eye on rock bottom. He is looking for returns; he wants to realize something from the start, and to build only as he can do so on profits. With you the profits will be always an after consideration and you won't get on. Your head will be in the clouds so that you will not notice the bog your feet are sinking into."

But Cyril was not to be convinced. He resigned, and when his gilt letters supplanted the old wooden sign of the former owner he felt prouder than he

would of an appointment as under-secretary in the president's cabinet.

Two years had passed. He still enjoyed the work, but he had encountered unexpected difficulties. He wanted to do artistic printing: he could be satisfied with no other. But his customers did not appreciate it or want to pay for it. There was an office in the next village with two linotypes and lots of presses that sent out men to take orders, and underbid him upon jobs in his own town. He would point out the difference between their work and his, but his customers thought only of the saving in cost. Some there were who liked dainty work and ordered it, but these again were often slow and uncertain in pay. The little capital he had started with had been exhausted, and now his bank credit was

gone. One of his payment notes was due the next day. He did not have the money to meet it, and this very afternoon the bank had refused to lend it to him.

"Personally you are all right," the cashier had said to him. "You are honest, industrious, capable, a master of your craft. There is no other work done in the country to compare with yours. But you are attempting the impossible. You are doing artist work for artisan pay. You are a race horse dragging a dump-cart. This community will never pay what your work costs. Every year you will get deeper in the hole. It is a kindness to you to keep you from sinking farther."

"Then you want me to become bankrupt?"

"That is the one way out of it. The

only creditor who will be much loser is the former proprietor, and he will get back the office in better condition than he left it, and have besides the thousand dollars you have already paid him. Then you can go back to teaching, a calling you are fitted for."

II

It was a bitter pill to swallow, but there seemed to be no alternative, and Cyril was musing over it so absorbedly and dejectedly that he did not at first hear a caller who entered.

"I beg your pardon," the man said, "are you Mr. Mead?"

"At your service, sir."

"I want to get a poem published."

The office would be closed by the sheriff next day, but Cyril held out his hand for

the manuscript mechanically. He ran his eye over the leaves and said, "In 12-point double-leaded, two stanzas to a page, it will make fifty pages. A hundred copies bound in boards, paper label, will cost you a hundred dollars."

"I suppose you could make it more attractive for more money?"

"O yes. On hand-made paper, printed in 4-page forms, it would cost you twice that, and be just as well worth the money, but not one reader in a hundred would notice it was any handsomer."

"Suppose we had illustrations?"

"A book of poems should never contain an illustration that costs less than a hundred dollars. A poem is imaginative, unfettered. An illustration by a man without a poetic soul confines the fancy and shuts out poetic vision."

"Can the best pictures be had for a hundred dollars each?"

"There is no limit to what pictures may cost. I don't know what prices professional illustrators get, but there is always the possibility of reaching the master painters, who will comprehend the poem and breathe their own great souls into it. I don't know how to reach these men or what it would cost, but I have no doubt it is possible."

"Then if we had an illustration for every stanza it would be expensive."

"Yes. In that case the words might be engraved too, as in William Morris's books. Personally I do not like that as well, however. I have always felt that the text should first of all be legible, and the pictures only a background."

"How about colors?"

"Anything but the cheap three- and four-color work so common now, especially in magazines. If color is used at all, it should be delicate and pure. I can conceive of a separate illustration for every stanza, a faint tint lying behind the text."

"Like an edition I have of Maeterlinck's 'The Swarm'?"

"As different from it as possible. I know that edition. There are eight plates of scenes in a bee's life, recurring in regular order, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, without the least regard to what happens to be on the page, printed in muddy green that only obscures the type, so that your tired eyes long for the fifth and eighth because they are more open. Anything but that. I mean a new illustration for every page,

in delicate water-color effect, somewhat vague and indefinite, suggesting what the poem means to appreciative souls but not portraying or obtruding: such a background as we always have in our thoughts behind the immediate subject of our speech. Only an artist of the highest class could conceive this, and I could not estimate what it would cost to make the proper plates for printing."

"Then it would be possible to spend a hundred thousand dollars on this hundred dollar book?"

"A hundred thousand dollars would not command what I have suggested."

"And if only a hundred copies were printed they would cost a thousand dollars each?"

"Yes."

"But suppose a hundred thousand copies were printed?"

"Then they would cost something more than a dollar each, before the binding."

"You spoke of blue paper boards with paper label. What is the very best binding a book can have?"

"Full turkey morocco."

"And what does that cost?"

"In large editions from a dollar upward."

"Suppose I gave you an order for half a million copies, with the illustrations you have described and all bound in full turkey morocco, what would cover the bill?"

The man was evidently unbalanced, but Cyril rather enjoyed letting his fancy run riot. "I should not want to undertake if for less than a million," he said.

"I will give you a million dollars now, in advance," said the stranger, "and leave the details entirely to you."

Cyril looked for his keeper to come in and get this well-dressed lunatic, but the man took out of a satchel a package which he handed over. "There is a million dollars in United States bonds registered in your name. I pay you in that form because you will need time to formulate your plan and make your connections, and meantime this money will be drawing interest: a draft for $10,000 will be mailed to you every three months and, when you sell the bonds will bring a premium. When your plans are developed use the money as you want it."

Cyril did not have much acquaintance with registered bonds, but these seemed to be genuine. "You tempt me more

than you know," he said; "when you came in I was reconciling myself to becoming bankrupt to-morrow because I could not raise the money to pay a note of five hundred dollars. Besides, such a commission would gratify far more than my highest ambition. But I am only an amateur country printer. You should take this opportunity to De Vinne in New York or Barrie in Philadephia or Goupil in Paris. I might set up a bill-head for you, but this magnificent publishing I have no training for."

"It isn't training and experience I am after, but imagination. I came here prepared to give you the work, as you see from the bonds, but our conversation has confirmed me in the assurance that you are the man. This book is not to follow in the old lines: it is to blaze a new path

for itself; you have the imagination and practical good sense to find it.

"Now let me explain. This is not my poem; no man could be less fit or less likely to have a poetical thought. It is the life work of my child, whom nature has dealt hardly with. She is nearly blind, nearly deaf, wholly cripple. She cannot go outside her room, she cannot see pictures or hear music. Yet she has what seem to me beautiful thoughts, and she has put her whole soul into this poem. If it could make a little place for itself in literature, if it could even meet a cordial welcome as an ephemeral book, and have some sale, and comfort some hearts, it would go far to make up to my child for what the world has denied her.

"So you see I do not want to spare any expense which might give it the most

luxurious garb that is fitting. If it costs the million to make and sell a hundred copies and those copies meet a response which shows the poem was not without merit and appreciators, I shall think the money well spent. Incidentally I may say that a million is not a great deal to me, only a fraction of my yearly income. You see I can afford to do this, and I hope you will see why it is a gratification to do it. Suppose you had a little girl just convalescing from scarlet fever and you thought of a toy that would make a day in the sick-room happier for her, would you haggle as to whether the toy was intrinsically worth what you paid for it? I put this in your hands because I believe you can appreciate my need, and devote yourself whole-heartedly to aiding me

in securing my daughter this one chance of happiness."

"I will accept the trust, and I will try to make up so far as possible by zeal for what I lack in other qualifications. I will give you a receipt for these bonds. In what name shall I write it?"

"You are not to give me any receipt or know my name."

"But how shall I communicate with you?"

"You are not to communicate with me. You are to go on and work this problem out in your own way. It may be years before any result appears. Everything is in your hands, and we shall not be impatient."

"But on what financial basis is my relation to the fund?"

"You are to draw from it a thousand

dollars a month and all your expenses, absolutely all. You will have to travel and see people and spend more and dress better and give entertainments, so that no limit will be placed on your outlay and no details will be asked: simply credit yourself now and then, 'expenses to date', so much. For the rest you can keep a general account of the cost of the work, and as a matter of form, and afterward perhaps of interest, you had better keep all bills. Some time or other, after the book is launched and we can see what has come of it, I shall drop in on you and we can have an accounting. But that will be very general. I want you to feel absolutely unhampered, so as to throw yourself at your best into this work."

"Suppose I am unfaithful to the trust, and use the money for myself."

"That is one of the chances I take."

"Suppose I die before much is done and while the bonds remain practically intact."

"That is another chance I take. I would rather lose the money that way than have you know my identity. In fact I want this interview to be an absolute secret between you and me. Nobody must know, absolutely no one, where you got these bonds, or who wrote the poem, or anything that I have told you. My daughter is strenuous that the poem shall stand entirely on its merit, and that no appreciation of it shall arise from sympathy."

"All this seems like a dream, it is so unreal," said Cyril.

"The bonds are no dream: ask your cashier."

And with a bow the stranger was gone.

"I *will* ask my cashier," said Cyril to himself, and he carried them over to the bank.

"I have had a windfall," he said simply, putting them in the cashier's hands.

"Of course you know I am curious," replied the cashier.

"Naturally, but I can tell you only that they came to me honestly. Are they good?"

"As the United States government."

"Then I shan't have to go into bankruptcy to-morrow. And they came to me through the business I am so unfitted for," Cyril added with some malicious satisfaction.

"All the same I advise you to get out of that printing-office."

III

When Cyril got back to his room he took up the poem patronizingly. "Now let's hope it is not impossible," he said to himself.

It was an hour's reading, and when he was done he said approvingly, "That isn't bad at all. It runs smoothly and it tells a pretty story well."

Here and there he had jotted notes in the margin where the poet had not used the obvious word, which he attributed to inexperience; but as he went back to these notes and looked more closely he saw that his obvious words had not quite expressed the meaning: those used were much more forceful. That set him to reading the poem again from a more appreciative standpoint, seeking rather to

enjoy than to criticise. This time he read with delight, not unmixed with astonishment. Beneath the simple story that a child could comprehend and enjoy there were a philosophy of life, a wisdom, a shrewdness, a humor, a sagacity that made him wonder. He read it a third time reverently, and sat over it far into the morning hours.

"If I can produce a fit setting for that poem," he said, "it will compel the world to admire."

The next day he sold back his printing office to the man from whom he had bought it and sailed for Paris.

IV

Arrived there he established himself in pleasant quarters, and began first to search out beautiful books. He bought

freely, gave orders for small jobs of printing and binding, gradually became well acquainted with the publishers of artistic works, and familiar with their printing-houses and binderies. He was introduced to authors and artists, and became a welcome guest in Bohemia. He had the poem printed in simple form and copyrighted it in all the countries of the league, and then set to work to find translators into all the languages of these countries. He had by this time determined to have the stanzas of the poem occupy each a page, with a colored illustration as a background. It was only necessary to have it translated stanza for stanza to make the colored plates equally available in all languages.

He was especially anxious that the French translation should be adequate,

for most of the other translators would be more familiar with French than with English, and he was satisfied that it would be to French artists he must look first for the delicate illustrations he wanted. He bought and paid for several translations before he secured one that satisfied him, and by this time, well as he knew the poem in English, he found that his conception had been greatly broadened by the cross lights the study of these translations had given him. So he enjoyed going over with the translators, stanza by stanza, the versions in Italian and Spanish and German, and in like manner picked up not a little of modern Greek. For Dutch and Russian and Japanese and Chinese and Arabic and Hebrew and other tongues he trusted to retranslation by other persons, repeated

till the sentiment was preserved and he had assurance from those who knew that the treatment was poetical. Then he had plates made in all these languages and the translations also copyrighted, where it was possible.

In the mean time he had been experimenting upon the illustrations. He knew the poem by heart and kept it always in mind. Stanza by stanza he worked out what seemed to him the most suggestive pictures, and kept careful note of every hint. But in dealing with artists he kept his own ideas hidden, that the imagination of the artist might be wholly undirected. He first went to Goupil & Co. with one of the stanzas in which the thought was of the host looking down upon us from heaven, and asked them to have a background made for it which

would express this idea to every one, diverse as their own conceptions might be. He paid liberally for half a dozen designs none of which would do, but he thereby became acquainted with the kind of people in Paris who do that sort of work. As he found those who seemed promising he gave them little commissions, and if their work showed the right freedom of imagination he gave them stanzas to experiment upon. He bought hundreds of sketches intrinsically valuable which yet failed of his purpose for this book, but one by one he got hold of conceptions that showed grasp, and by going over them again and again with the artists he finally secured his hundred designs.

Then came the transferring to plates, for the backgrounds. Here he trusted

to the firms which had done his finest experimental work. Even then the first proofs were seldom satisfactory, and there were long consultations with artists and engravers. But he paid liberally and secured generous co-operation, so that by the end of two years the book was ready to print. Small editions were struck off in all the languages in which translations had been made, and arrangements were completed for printing in those countries where the copyright laws demanded that the work be done there.

There was still the question of binding. He had decided to print a million copies, and to bind that number on the start. That would exhaust the morocco market, and he had been quietly getting options on every skin purchasable. On a given day and hour he completed the pur-

chases simultaneously, and ordered most of the skins sent to New York. He had put in two busy years, but the work was done satisfactorily, and he returned to America. "Perhaps that cashier will some time admit he underrated me," he said to himself on the steamer as he reviewed his work.

V

The problems of paper and printing and binding were difficult, but to a man ready to pay cash for a million copies and who had his morocco in stock all things were possible, and he made contracts at prices which surprised him. His million copies in full morocco would cost including all the preliminary expenses less than two-thirds the amount at his disposal, and leave him a liberal fund for advertising.

The problem of sale was of course the most difficult of all. He had decided to make the price one dollar, and as the little book was in artistic finish and illustration and binding fully the equal of any in the market at ten times that price, it ought to find purchasers enough to exhaust the edition. But his especial ambition had been to make the sale a financial success; he would show the cashier there was one teacher who had capacity to get returns. He could not give discounts to the trade and still make the sale profitable. He resolved that every copy should bring the full dollar, postage extra if sent by mail. The trade therefore could have a profit only of the difference between what freight would cost and the twenty cents postage. It was not great, yet if the number sold

were large enough to would be well worth while.

He further determined under no circumstances to give away a copy, even for review. He proposed so to advertise the book that it would be a matter of news, and newspapers would have to write about it. So he prepared a page advertisement to appear simultaneously in the principal journals of every city in the land, describing the book, giving a reproduction in black of what would be the most appealing page, a stanza that would seem to every one a recalling of his own experience, with a background where the artistic reached almost to genius. He showed that in form the book was equal to those that hitherto only the wealthy had been able to buy, and stated that the edition was limited and that all

orders would be filled in the order received.

The check for these advertisements was in six figures, and the sales the first month did not reach into four. But he followed up the first advertisement by a multitude of others, and presently the sales began to grow. Freight orders came in from dealers. It was a proud day for him when he received his first order for a car-load, but it was followed by others. The daily mail orders grew to hundreds and finally to thousands: the book had taken hold. "That cashier would like to have me keep my account in his bank," Cyril chuckled.

As he expected, the newspapers were forced to notice it, grudgingly at first, offended at the absence of the usual free copies, and praising if at all rather the

mechanical construction of the book than its meaning. But after *The Atlantic Monthly* made the poem the subject of its leading article and hailed the author as one of the great heart poets, the other literary journals began to discuss its meaning, and possessors of the book who had read it once for the story and laid it aside, took it up again and found the second reading more interesting than the first and the third than the second. The city of St. Louis adopted it as a text book in the eighth grade and ordered five thousand copies. Other schools followed suit, and before the year was over Cyril Mead knew his million copies would bring in the full million dollars. He had still been buying nearly all the morocco produced, and he ordered another million copies printed. "Pity a

teacher has no business sagacity," he smiled, as he thought of the cashier in his country bank.

VI

Six months later a man entered his office whom he did not at first recognize, but whom the first word recalled as the father of the poet.

"Of all the men in the world you are the one most welcome," Cyril said. "Of course you have seen the book, but I want you to look at this;" and he showed him a row of twenty volumes, each in a different color of morocco and in a different language. "And I want your daughter to know that I have letters in every one of those languages that will make her heart glad. It is a great book: she ranks among the world's real authors.

"Now I want to show you something else," and without giving the man a chance to speak he took him to the vaults of a trust company near by. "I have had the ambition to prove to your daughter that her book is a financial success. You gave me a million dollars in United States bonds. I used every dollar, but it has all come back. There are a million dollars in United States bonds, besides our stock and plates and a big bank account. Take these now, and we will go back to the office."

"I would rather leave these with you for the present," the man said. "I want you to come with me to see my daughter for whom you have done so much."

"She is the one person in the world I wanted to see more than you," replied Cyril, his eyes shining.

An automobile was waiting, and the two men were whirled to a noble suburban residence, set far back in spacious grounds.

"I wonder if Aurora will be able to see us," the man asked anxiously of the motherly housekeeper who appeared.

"I hope so," she said; "I will inquire."

Presently they were ushered to a dark room, in a distant corner of which a girl was reclining on a couch, her eyes covered, a light shawl over her, hidden so that her crippled form could not be outlined. Cyril approached her softly, prepared to adapt himself to one so helpless and yet so gifted.

"Can she hear me?" he asked.

"If you speak slowly and distinctly," was the reply.

So in carefully articulated syllables Cyril told her, not what a success the book

had been, but what it had been to him. He had taken it as a printer, but as he studied it to know how to give it mechanical form he had found it entering into his life, broadening his conceptions, lifting his ideals. He quoted passages that had especially moved him, and wondered at the insight and the happiness of expression. There were tears in his tones, for he had longed to pay this tribute to the crippled author.

She replied in a low, rich voice, and he soon found himself in earnest conversation. He wondered that in her affliction she should have preserved such vigor and keenness and readiness, with such ever-underlying humor. As he rose to go he said hesitatingly, "I wish you would grant me a great favor."

"What is it?" she asked.

"I have heard you and talked with you; may I not also see you?"

Her voice sounded hurt. "You would be greatly disappointed," she said.

"That could not be," he replied. "I have been told of your affliction, but with a soul like yours the tenement does not matter."

"Then why should you wish to see it?"

"Because you seem so dear to me that I want to know you as entirely as possible."

"What you know of me is the best of me; to know the rest might sadden you."

"I do not believe you realize my sympathy with you. I feel in a way as if you were closer to me than any one I have ever known. In your poem I have found the development of my highest thoughts, and, crude as I am, I have felt that in

substance our souls were akin. I have longed to know you face to face; I am longing so now."

"As you will," she replied in a resigned voice, and she touched a button that flooded the room with light. She threw off the light shawl that had covered her, and sprang up lithe, laughing, beautiful, the most perfect woman Cyril had ever seen.

His face flushed. "Is this some trick?" he asked, not without indignation.

"I told you you would be disappointed," she replied mockingly.

"I *am* disappointed. It must be you who wrote the poem, but why should you have deceived me?"

"It was in a way a test. I wanted to see if you could keep a secret. In all the notices of my book there has never been

an allusion to the blind and crippled author."

"Your father asked me not to tell," replied Cyril stiffly, "and I have never varied from the reply, 'I can give you no information'."

"The man who came to you is not my father; he is my lawyer. I have no parents, and am only a rather unruly and friendless girl with a great deal of money and very little taste to spend it in the usual ways. So I threw myself into this poem, which grew to mean a great deal to me. I wanted it to have a fair chance with the public; some little memorial verses you printed made me think you might be able to help me, so I sent Mr. Dillingham to you. It was a fortunate choice, as you know. And yet now that you see me you are disappointed."

"I *am* disappointed," repeated Cyril, still coldly, "because I might have been something to the blind, helpless, crippled girl of my imagination. You do not need me, as perhaps she might have needed me."

"Perhaps I need you more than she would have needed you," Aurora said softly.

"I have nothing to offer to a handsome and wealthy girl who will be world-famous as soon as she reveals her identity," he said. "You can choose from all mankind."

"I have chosen from all mankind," she replied, again in that soft voice.

He saw the love-light in her eyes and he clasped her in that first embrace which means so much.

"Such happiness for a penniless printer," he murmured.

"But you are not penniless; that million in bonds was always a gift: it is yours, with all that has come from it."

"It is not worth arguing about," he replied lightly; "with you in my arms what matters a million or two?"

VII

Somebody was nudging his elbow. He grew impatient and turned. "Well what is it?" he asked.

It was the office boy. "There are eight last month's bills that ought to go out again," he said. "Can you give me sixteen cents for postage?"

Cyril felt mechanically and vainly in his pockets. "Never mind them till to-morrow," he said; and then as he looked

about the barren office he added, "It makes no difference now."

He had waked up. He has gone back to teaching, but not to his old school, and among his references he never gives the name of the old cashier.

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